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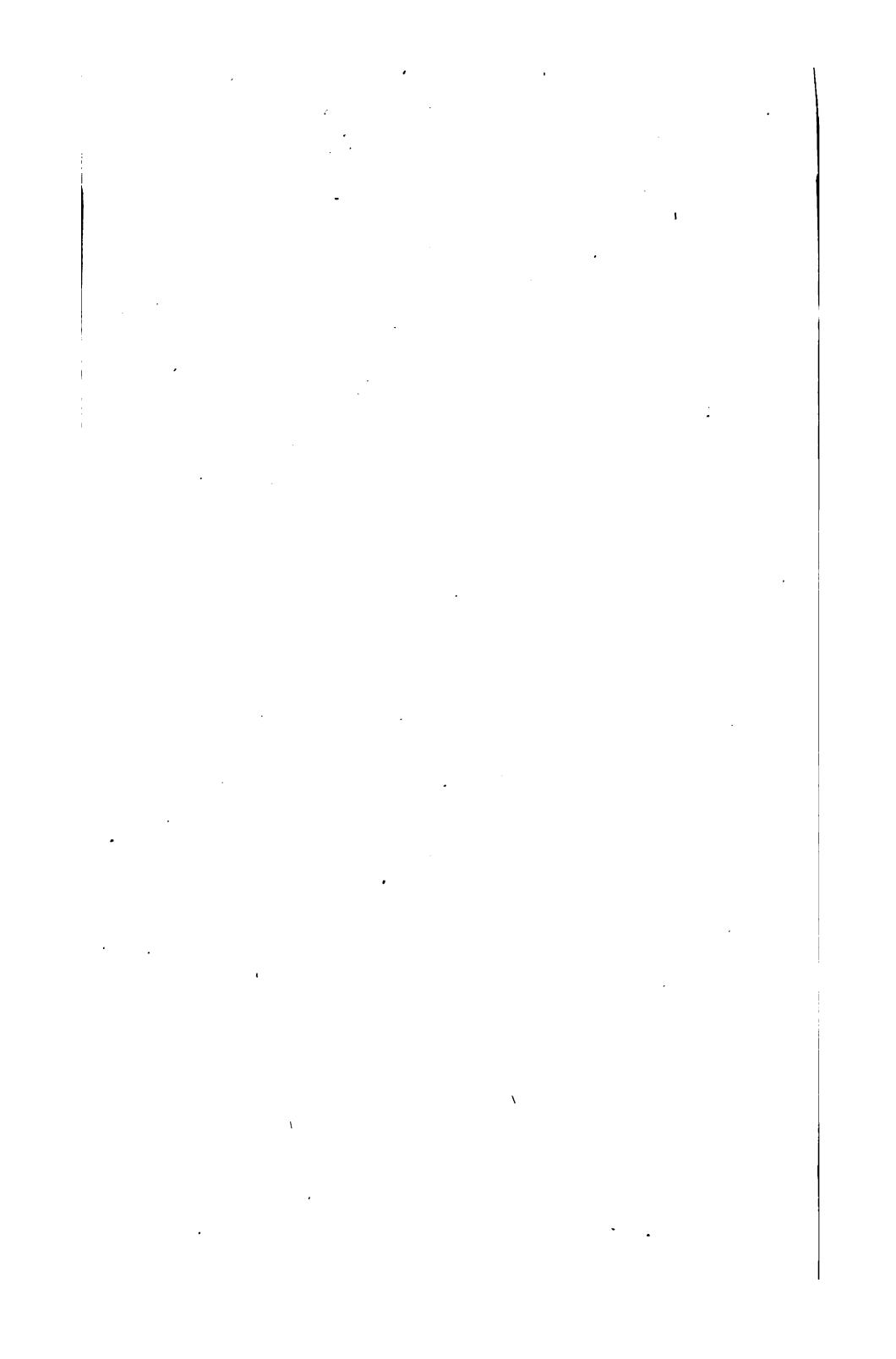




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THE EPISTLE .  
OF THE  
APOSTLE PAUL TO THE ROMANS;  
WITH NOTES,  
CHIEFLY EXPLANATORY.

DESIGNED AS  
AN ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE AUTHOR'S NOTES ON THE  
GOSPELS AND THE ACTS.

BY  
HENRY J. RIPLEY,  
NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THE present volume has for its purpose the elucidation of the phraseology and reasoning of the Epistle to the Romans. My aim has been, to aid readers in correctly apprehending the Apostle's thoughts, not stopping short of a full exhibition of his meaning and not going beyond his meaning. I have sought definitely to express my own views, the result of a long-continued and earnest study of the epistle, during which I have, of course, welcomed help from others, but have endeavored to keep myself from subjection to them. My plan did not require me to detail the grammatical and exegetical processes which conducted to the results; nor to introduce the opinions of others for the purpose of refuting them, or of sustaining my own. I regard it a better service, simply and definitely to present what I consider the Apostle's ideas.

Though the Notes are adapted to our common English version, yet in reality the original epistle is their basis; and I trust they will be found useful to theological students and ministers of the gospel, as well as to others.

As the epistle is mostly a connected course of thought, it ought to be studied, not in detached and widely distant portions, but

continuously from the beginning onward, so that the attitude of the writer's mind may be discovered and the reader may place himself in the same position ; and thus the early portions may make the subsequent ones more intelligible. Passages separated from their connection and examined without reference to points which have been previously established, or without reference to the author's design and circumstances, are easily misunderstood and may even appear inexplicable ; while difficulties may be surmounted, with a good degree of satisfaction, by one who reads in connection, and who discerns the relation of one part, or topic, to another.

To aid the reader in observing the continuity of thought in the epistle, and the transitions to related thoughts, I have advised its being printed here, not according to the customary and arbitrary division into verses, but by paragraphs. For the convenience, however, of notes and of reference, the figures, which in ordinary editions designate the verses, are retained on the side of the page. I have also placed at the head of each chapter, a mention, in the form of an analysis, of the topics occupying its several paragraphs.

Those who are acquainted with my Notes on the Gospels, and on the Acts of the Apostles, will discover a general conformity in the present work to the design and principles of those volumes.

H. J. R.

## INTRODUCTION.

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### ORIGIN OF THE ROMAN CHURCH.

THE origin of the church in Rome is hid in obscurity. In the absence of all reliable historical information, we can readily believe that, soon after the events of the day of Pentecost, as related in the second chapter of the Acts, Christians would be found in the great capital of the Roman empire, which had so active a connection, both political and commercial, with all parts of the known world. Many of its citizens could not fail, in their journeys for business, to become acquainted with the gospel; and some, doubtless, both Gentiles and Jews, became true converts, who would, on their return, seek to promote in their own city the religion of Christ. Various occasions would, also, lead to Rome, both for temporary and for stated residence, persons who had become Christians. Preachers of the gospel, too, doubtless found their way to the imperial city. Through these and similar concurring circumstances, a church was soon formed, consisting, like the other early churches, of converted Gentiles and Jews.

### THE APOSTLE'S ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE CHRISTIANS AT ROME.

At the time of writing this epistle, Paul had not been at Rome, though he had for many years cherished the desire to visit the church there and to strengthen its interests. See 1: 10-13. 15: 22-24, 28, 29. The importance of this church, as situated in the capital of the world, and thus having a wide influence on Christian affairs, suffi-

## INTRODUCTION.

ciently accounts for this desire: but, besides, he was personally acquainted with not a few of its members, as appears from the 16th chapter, having met with them in his various journeys; some of them were his own relatives, 16: 7, 11; some of them had shared with him in labors and privations for the gospel's sake, 16: 7, 9; and from some he had received many attentions, 16: 6, 13. Having been thus far prevented from visiting them by the demand for his services in regions where the gospel had not yet been made known, 1: 13. 15: 22, he availed himself of a favorable opportunity for writing to them. He knew sufficiently the affairs of the church; by current report, doubtless, as to some things; as to others, we may well believe, by information from members with whom he had met in various places, and from preachers who were personally acquainted with its condition.

### MAIN PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE.

The epistle is a connected discourse. It presents and establishes the distinguishing doctrine of the gospel in reference to the salvation of men, particularly in view of the objections and difficulties which Jews would be likely to feel. The distinctive feature of the gospel is stated in 1: 17; namely, it discloses the righteousness which avails for men's acceptance with God, the righteousness which comes from faith. The statement there made is, so to speak, the main theme of discourse, in reference both to men's present acceptance with God and their becoming prepared, through personal holiness, for heaven. The first eight chapters are devoted to this subject.

### ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST EIGHT CHAPTERS.

The apostle shows, in the first place, the need of salvation, in respect both to Gentiles and Jews, in consequence of the exposure of all alike to divine wrath on account of sin, 1: 18 to 3: 20; and then, as all are sinners and none can be saved by virtue of their own deeds, he presents faith in the propitiatory death of Christ as required alike from all, and as that which will be accepted as righteousness and will avail for justification in the sight of God, 3: 21-30. As meeting the queries of a Jewish mind at this point, he affirms that this mode of justifying men does not invalidate the law as exhibited by Moses; that, on the contrary, it establishes the law; and that the Old Testament

presents essentially the same principle of acceptance with God, 3 : 31 to 4 : 25.

The happy consequences of this justifying faith are next presented, 5 : 1-11 ; and a contrast is drawn between Adam, through whom sin and death came, and Christ, through whom come righteousness and life, 5 : 12-21.

The principle, that faith is put to a person's account as righteousness, illustrative as it is of the grace, or loving favor, of God, is next viewed in its relation to the holiness of a believer.

Faith in Christ, so far from allowing sin, makes its possessor dead to sin through his participation in the death of Christ, or through his union with Christ in respect to his death, 6 : 1-14. The believer is no longer under the law, the requisitions of which prove an occasion of excitement to sin : he now serves God, having a new spirit towards him and standing in a new relation to him, 6 : 15 to 7 : 1-6.

The apostle then portrays the influence of the divine law on the human soul, when a man is viewed aside from the gracious provision which faith in Christ secures. The law of God, though in itself holy and good, yet when brought into contact with the human soul, awakens a distressing sense of sinfulness and of criminal inability to obey it. Instead of securing obedience, the law, though it commends itself to the reason and conscience, as just and good, awakens and stimulates in the human soul sinful desires, and can produce only a sense of sinfulness and danger, 7 : 7-24. Deliverance from this misery can come only through Christ, 7 : 25. Faith in Christ delivers from this bondage to sin ; because to the believer in Christ the Spirit of God imparts life ; the believer is a child of God, enjoying his paternal treatment and the hope of partaking in the glory of Christ ; a hope which is sure, having its foundation in the eternal purpose and unchanging love of God, 8 : 1-39.

#### REJECTION OF THE JEWS.

Since it is by faith in Christ, and not through the Mosaic law, that men can be accounted as righteous in the sight of God, the Jews, refusing to believe in him, are rejected. This inevitable result could not but be painful to the Christian Jews ; and it needed explanation, as being apparently inconsistent with the promises of God. To relieve

this difficulty and vindicate the divine conduct towards the nation, the apostle next takes up the subject of the Jews' rejection and devotes to it the 9th, 10th and 11th chapters.

#### ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS 9, 10, 11.

After avowing his grief at the sad condition of the Jews, 9: 1-5, the apostle repels the supposition that God had failed to fulfil his promise. God's promise remains true: in its fulfilment, however, he acts, not on the principle that any men have, or can acquire, a ground for *claiming* blessings from him, as though deserving them, but according to his own free designs and grace, 9: 6-29. The fault lay in the unbelief of the Jews themselves, 9: 30. 10: 1-21.

Grounds for consolation are next presented: namely, it is only a part of the Jews that are rejected; their rejection has proved favorable, and will yet prove favorable to the Gentiles; their recovery is, also, to be expected, 11: 1-32.

#### HORTATORY SECTION, AND CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE.

Then follows the hortatory part of the epistle, 12: 1 to 15: 18, containing exhortations adapted, in part, to all Christians, and specially appropriate, in part, to the Christians in Rome.

The remainder of the epistle, from 15: 14, is occupied with expressions of the apostle's kind feelings towards the Roman church, with salutations to numerous individuals, and with other kindred matter. The whole ends with an ascription of glory to God.

#### TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING THE EPISTLE.

The epistle was written, probably, in the year 58 or 59, while the apostle was on his way to Jerusalem, 15: 25, with a contribution from the Gentile Christians in Macedonia and Achaia for the indigent among the Christians in Jerusalem.

From the commendation which it contains, 16: 1, of Phebe of Cenchrea, since this place was a sea-port of Corinth, and from the mention of Gaius, a member of the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 4), as the apostle's host, 16: 23, it is sufficiently clear that the epistle was sent from Corinth, and conveyed by Phebe.

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# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

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## CHAPTER I.

*Opening salutation, 1-7. Gratitude to God for the steadfastness of the Roman Christians, and desire to visit them, together with a statement of the essential principle of the gospel, 8-17. Sinfulness and condemnation of the Gentiles, 18-33.*

1 PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore

### CHAPTER I.

After an opening salutation, vs. 1-7, and the expression of desire to become personally acquainted with the Christians at Rome, 8-15, the apostle avows his sense of the glory of the gospel, and states its essential and distinctive principle, 16, 17, thus proposing the main subject of the epistle. As the first step in the treatment of his subject, he exposes the sinfulness and consequent condemnation of the Gentiles, 18-32.

1-7. The first seven verses are an introductory paragraph, containing the apostle's opening salutation to the Roman Christians collectively, an assertion of his call to the apostleship among the Gentiles, and an avowal of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

1. *A servant of Jesus Christ.* This expression might designate a person either as a follower of Christ, a Christian, as in Eph. 6: 6, or as sustaining some official relation to Christ, in the same manner as the ancient prophets were called *servants of Jehovah*. The latter is the meaning here intended. The expression is a general one, not indicating the

particular kind of service to which the writer had been called: the kind of service is indicated in the next clause. || *Called to be an apostle*: or, *a called apostle*; that is, *an apostle called to office by Christ*; 1 Cor. 1: 1. It was important to mention the fact of his having been *called* to the apostleship, since that placed him on an equality with the other acknowledged apostles who had been specially called by Christ to their office. Like them, he was a *called apostle*, appointed, not by any human authority, but by Christ; not impelled simply by his own desires, but by divine influence. Compare 1 Cor. 1: 1. 2 Cor. 1: 1. Gal. 1: 1. || *Separated unto the gospel of God*; set apart to the work of making known the gospel. Reference is had either to the historical date of his conversion, when he was instructed by Christ to become an apostle, as in Acts 26: 15-18, compare Acts 13: 2, or to the original purpose of God concerning him, as in Gal. 1: 15.—The etymological signification of the word *gospel* is here retained: it not only signifies a particular system of

**3** by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,—which was made of the seed of David **4** according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection

religion, but also denominates this as the joyful announcement, the glad tidings, which God has communicated concerning his Son our Saviour. Paul here represents himself as divinely set apart to the special work of widely making known this joyful message from God, of explaining and inculcating the doctrines of the gospel, particularly the doctrine of faith in Christ as the appointed medium of our salvation.

**2.** *Which he had promised afore by his prophets, etc.* Reference is here made to the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah which are scattered throughout the scriptures of the Old Testament.—Thus, in his introductory paragraph, Paul brings distinctly to view one of the chief arguments for the truth and divinity of the gospel: God's own prophets, specially instructed by him, had uttered, in great variety, predictions concerning a Saviour and the new order of things which he would introduce for the salvation of men; and these predictions had received their fulfilment in Christ and his religion.—As specimens of the manner in which this argument was perpetually employed by the apostles, see Acts 2: 22-36. 10: 43. 13: 29-41.

**3.** *Concerning his Son;* more correctly, his own Son; his Son in a peculiar sense. The joyful message in the gospel, promised by God in former ages, had respect to his own Son, by whose advent, life and death, the promised scheme of redemption was consummated. **|| Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;** who, according to his fleshly, or human nature, was born from the posterity of David: as to his human nature, he was a descendant of David. So the evangelists, Matthew and Luke, in giving the

genealogy of Jesus, Matt. 1: 1-16. Luke 3: 23-38, show him to have descended from the royal house of David. In reference to this view of Christ as a man, descended from David, see Matt. 2: 5. 22: 41-46. Rom. 9: 5. Gal. 4: 4.

**4.** *And declared to be the Son of God.* The word declare formerly meant to make clear. This sufficiently well corresponds to the original term, which signifies marked out, designated. In addition to the view of Christ presented in the preceding verse, he is the Son of God, partaking of the divine nature. **|| With power;** powerfully, with convincing evidence. He is, in a powerful manner, with convincing evidence, set forth as the Son of God. **|| According to the spirit of holiness.** It is not the Holy Spirit, personally, that is here meant; but, in contrast with the flesh, mentioned in the preceding verse, that spiritual holy nature by which Christ was distinguished from men and was so worthy of veneration. Compare 1 Pet. 3: 18.—Thus a twofold view of Christ is here presented: one, in reference to his human descent, as the son of David: the other, in reference to his pre-existing spiritual and holy nature which distinguished him as the Son of God.

Compare John 1: 1-3. 17: 5. 2 Cor. 4: 4. Phil. 2: 6, 7. Col. 1: 15, 16. Heb. 1: 3. This spiritual nature is here characterized as holy, probably in contrast with the sinfulness of men, whose nature Christ assumed, and as a ground for adoring veneration. **|| By the resurrection from the dead.** Our Lord's resurrection from the dead was the specially powerful, convincing, evidence that he was what he claimed to be, the Son of God. His prediction that he should be delivered up to death and be raised from the dead, Luke 18:

5 from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostle-  
6 ship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his  
7 name: among whom are ye also, the called of Jesus Christ:—  
to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:  
Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord  
Jesus Christ.

33, was exactly fulfilled. This argument was repeatedly employed by the apostles, as satisfactory and complete confirmation of his being the Son of God and the Messiah. See Acts 2 : 30-32. 13 : 29-38. 1 Cor. 15 : 4, 14, 17. The resurrection of Christ from the dead was so manifestly a work of God, that its attestation to the truth of our Lord's claims was irresistible.

5. *By whom we have received.* Paul, though using the plural number, is here speaking of himself, since he is making grateful acknowledgment of the high service to which he had been called. || *Grace:* not so much the grace, or favor, of God, by which he had received pardon and all personal spiritual good, as that favor, or kindness, by which he had been selected and qualified for the public service of Christ. Compare 12 : 3. 15 : 15. Eph. 3 : 2, 8. || *Apostleship.* The special design of this grace is now exhibited, as selecting and qualifying him to be an apostle of Christ, to publish and vindicate the principles of his religion. || *For obedience to the faith;* or, for obedience to faith. The purpose for which the apostle was called to his office was, that he might bring men to obey the religion of the gospel, in which faith is a cardinal principle, in distinction from works, or the performance of religious deeds, as a medium of salvation. In truly receiving the gospel, men render obedience to faith, since faith is the indispensable requisite to its blessings. || *Among all nations;* among all the Gentiles as well as among the Jews. Obedience to faith, or to the requisition of faith in Christ for salvation, was to be accomplished among all

nations. || *For his name;* in behalf of his name: that he might be universally known and acknowledged, and that due honor might be everywhere rendered to him.

6. *The called of Jesus Christ;* those who have been called to be disciples of Christ and to partake of the blessings which he bestows. As this calling to the blessings of the gospel is usually ascribed to God the Father, the Roman Christians may here be spoken of as those who have been called of God to a participation in the blessings which Jesus Christ bestows. The *calling*, frequently mentioned in the New Testament, involves also, generally, the idea of an acceptance of the invitation, so that the *invited* are also actually the partakers of the offered blessings, the *called* are the *chosen*. Sometimes a distinction is made between the *called* and the *chosen*; as in Matt. 20 : 16; usually, however, as in Rom. 8 : 30, the *calling* is of that effectual character which includes the idea of being *chosen* and of being actually admitted to the possession of the blessings proposed.—A large number of the Roman Christians were converted Gentiles.

7. *To all that be in Rome, beloved,* etc.; more exactly according to the original, To all the beloved ones of God that are in Rome, his called saints. || *Beloved of God;* regarded with love by him as disciples of his Son; hence, regarded as Christians in a state of reconciliation with God. || *Called to be saints.* The word *saints* is a designation of Christians: Christians are God's *called saints*, those whom he has called to holiness. Compare Eph. 1 : 4. The design sign for which the religion of Christ

## 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that

was established and for which his followers were called of God is here expressed: namely, that they might be holy and devoted to God. The term *saints* is not a mere appellation transferred from the Jews to the Christians; for not external and ceremonial holiness is here signified, but real purity of character, such as the gospel enjoins and cultivates. The Jews anciently, as being the chosen people of God, were called a holy people, Num. 16: 3. Deut. 7: 6; they were distinct from other nations as to idolatry and various moral corruptions and were required, as being the professed people of God, to be truly holy. Lev. 11: 44. 19: 2. 20: 7, 8. This word, *holy* or *saints*, was particularly applicable to the people of Christ, as the gospel is eminently a religion of the heart. Since the gospel thus primarily and eminently required holiness as the chief discriminating element between those who embraced it and others, all who professed to adopt it might be appropriately addressed as saints, or holy persons, since it might be assumed in writing to a company of avowed Christians that they were what they professed to be. || *Grace to you and peace:* the Christian form of salutation, frequently occurring in the epistles of Paul, both at the opening and at the close. It acknowledges the grace, or favor, of God as the source of all spiritual good; *peace* here being that blessed state of well-being which is designed for the followers of Christ and which results from God's gracious disposition towards them.—A usual form of salutation among the ancient Hebrews was, *Peace be with you.* In the apostle's use and generally among Christians, it had of course a deeper signification than when employed in ordinary life, as it related to spiritual well-being and acknowledged the divine source of such a blessing. Compare John 20: 19, 21, 26.—A customary form of salutation among the Greeks in their epistles was a word corresponding to the term, *greeting*, or, *joy be to you.* This occurs but twice in the New Testament; namely, Acts 15: 23, and James 1: 1. It was not universally employed among the Greeks; and seems to have been generally laid aside among the Christians, since they preferred a form of expression which distinctly acknowledged the true God and Jesus Christ, divine grace as the source of good, and the blessed condition in which the Lord Jesus places his followers. || *From God our Father;* as the giver of all good. || *The Lord Jesus Christ;* as the Mediator, through whom the kindness of God bestows all spiritual good.

8-17. Before entering on the main subject of the epistle, Paul expresses his gratitude to God for the well-known steadfastness of the Roman Christians, his interest in their spiritual welfare, his desire to visit Rome in order that he might be useful to them by his personal ministry, his disappointment in not having yet been able to gratify this desire, and his sense of obligation to make known the gospel as widely as possible, since it disclosed the righteousness which God has prescribed for men's being justified in his sight. He is thus led to intimate the great topic of the epistle. This may be stated as a reply to the question, How shall man be just with God? by works of his own, or by faith? Not by his own works, but by faith.—This paragraph was well fitted to attract attention, to excite and strengthen the Romans' fraternal feelings towards the writer, to awaken interest in the subsequent discussion, and to promote their readiness to receive his views.

8. *First;* that is, *as the first thing:* as if the writer had said, Before entering on the main design of my epistle, let me express my gratitude to

9 your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God  
is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of  
his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always  
10 in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at

God, etc. A corresponding word in subsequent verses, such as *secondly*, or *next*, is not, therefore, requisite. The apostle here writes in the free epistolary style which does not require the formality of elaborate and exact composition. || *My God*: Him to whom eminently I belong, whose servant in proclaiming the gospel which you have received I avow myself. || *Through Jesus Christ*; the Mediator, in whose name I give thanks to God and through whom the great blessing, for which I give thanks, namely, faith in the gospel, has been conferred on you. || *For you all*; in behalf of you all. || *That your faith is spoken of*, etc.; that your faith in Christ and your steadfast discipleship to him are everywhere spoken of. Not only the personal Christian character of the Roman believers was a ground of gratitude to the apostle, but also the wide-spread influence of their example, as decided followers of Christ.—Rome was, at that time, the great central city, or capital, of the known world. What took place at Rome was soon known throughout the empire which comprised almost the entire known world. The religion of Christ, which could not but create a sensation in an idolatrous city, would become, when planted in this great capital, very widely known by the connection, political, commercial, literary and religious, of this city with all parts of the empire. It was indeed a ground for gratitude that the Christians at Rome were universally known as steadfast believers in Christ. || *Throughout the whole world*, a hyperbolical expression, equivalent to *everywhere* in our ordinary conversation; not, of course, to be understood with literal exactness, but signifying *very extensively*, or *all over the Roman empire*. 9. The gratitude which the apostle expressed was necessarily associated with an interest in the spiritual welfare of the Roman Christians. This interest seems to be the ground of the present verse. *For God is my witness, whom I serve*, etc.; for the sincerity of my interest in you I appeal to the all-knowing God who has called me to serve him.—The original word here rendered *serve* shows that the service referred to is not a general obedience to God in all circumstances, but the service of God in religious matters specifically. The apostle conceives of himself here as set apart to the public duties of religion; and his official service he renders in laboring for the extension of the gospel. To him who brought him into this official relation he appeals for the truth of his professed interest in the spiritual well-being of the Roman Christians. || *With my spirit*. The sincerity of the apostle's service of God is here intimated; it was not an external heartless routine of observances, but a service in which his soul was truly engaged; not a blind, but an intelligent service; not of constraint, but willingly. || *In the gospel of his Son*. The particular service rendered was the publishing and vindicating of the gospel. || *That without ceasing I make mention of you*; that I bear you in mind unceasingly, as objects of prayer to God. See Phil. 1: 3. 1 Thess. 1: 2. Compare Phil. 1: 7, 8. || *Always in my prayers*. This clause would be better placed at the commencement of the following verse, so that we might read thus—*Always in my prayers making request*, etc. 10. *If by any means*, etc.; if by any means I may succeed, by the

length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God  
 11 to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart  
 unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be estab-  
 12 lished: that is, that I may be comforted together with you,  
 13 by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not  
 have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to  
 come unto you (but was let hitherto) that I might have some  
 14 fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am  
 debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians, both to the

will of God, in my purpose to come to you.

11. *For I long to see you.* His constant remembrance of them and prayers for them proceeded from an earnest desire to see them and contribute to their spiritual good. || *Some spiritual gift;* some gift of a spiritual character, adapted to benefit your souls, and corresponding to the new temper which the Holy Spirit has imparted. The apostle wished to increase their Christian knowledge, and strengthen their purposes and hopes.—It is not necessary to suppose that he meant by *spiritual gift* any miraculous endowment, but, as would appear from the next verse, the gift of knowledge and of confirmation in Christian faith and hope. || *To the end ye may be established;* in order that ye may be confirmed in your Christian character. Such was the result which he would anticipate from a visit to them.

12. *That is.* As the thought of their becoming established might seem to imply a deficiency of Christian strength on their part and a supposition that they needed the presence of an apostle to render them stable, and so might possibly make the impression that he felt himself superior to them, the apostle at once, in the very considerate and condescending spirit which he habitually cherished, modifies the language and urbanely gives such a direction to the thought as to make himself a participator in the good result of a visit, since he needed, like all Christians, encouragement and strength-

ening. || *That I may be comforted together with you;* that while among you, not only you, but myself also, may receive encouragement and strength from my visit, by our mutual faith.

13. In accordance with his desire to see the Roman brethren, he assures them that he had long since purposed to visit them but had been hitherto prevented.—*I would not have you ignorant;* I wish you to know: a form of expression frequent with the apostle. See 11: 25. 1 Cor. 10: 1. 1 Thess. 4: 13. || *Some fruit;* some result of my apostolical labors.

14. The apostle's desire and purpose to visit Rome sprang from his sense of obligation to preach the gospel as extensively as possible, among people of all nations and of whatever degree of culture. *I am debtor;* I am under obligation. He had received a charge from the Saviour to publish the gospel among the Gentiles, and thus was under obligation to Christ in reference to them. || *To the Greeks and to the Barbarians;* barbarians, not necessarily in the sense of wild, savage men, but simply as not being Greeks, but being foreigners in respect to the Greeks: compare Acts 28: 2, 4. 1 Cor. 14: 11. The twofold expression, Greeks and barbarians, includes all Gentile nations. Among the Greeks, however, the apostle doubtless included the Romans, since he could address them in the Greek language and the Roman empire had, at that time, absorbed the Grecian states. || *To the wise and to the unwise;* the educated

15 wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;

and the untanght, the refined and the rude. He felt under obligation, having been separated to this work, to preach the gospel to all.

16. The gospel had encountered opposition and reproach: in view of this and of the probability that in Rome especially it would meet with hostility and contempt, self-denial and elevation above the world were required in one who would appear in Rome as the champion of the gospel. Compare Acts 17: 18, 32. 1 Cor. 1: 22, etc. But such a view could not shake the apostle's purpose; for he had an exalted estimate of the gospel. — *I am not ashamed of the gospel.* By this negative expression he avows his lofty idea of the excellence of the gospel: as if he had said, It is not a matter to be ashamed of, but one to glory in. || *For it is the power of God unto salvation.* God employs the gospel as the medium of his power in saving men. The method of salvation made known in the gospel enables him to save sinners consistently with his perfections and righteous government; or, more strictly in accordance with the apostle's following words, it is the medium through which the power of God acts on the spirit of man, renovating and transforming it, making it holy, and thus saving it from the condemnation and ruin which sin, if not thus counteracted, would inevitably produce. As in complicated machinery, when we ask, where is the power that regulates it and effects the result, we are directed to some wheel, or shaft, and are told, That is the power; so in the work of human salvation, the gospel is the power: it is God's power, as being that through which he accomplishes the result; and in an important sense we might say, divine power resides in it. A

similar view of the gospel, particularly of its central doctrine concerning Christ, is presented in 1 Cor. 1: 18. — *Salvation,* agreeably to the thoughts in the two following verses, included both the idea of deliverance from the wrath of God against sin and that of a person's actual acceptance to his favor as justified, that is, treated as if righteous. The term is equivalent to *eternal life.* || *To every one;* not to persons of a particular nation: thus the exclusiveness of God's favor to Jews, as the Jews were disposed to restrict it to themselves, is guarded against. Not merely for Jews is salvation provided, but for Gentiles also. || *That believeth;* that reposes faith in Christ as the Saviour: thus the Jewish idea of salvation through a legal righteousness, or through obedience to the Mosaic law, is also counteracted. A genuine personal faith in Christ, or becoming his disciple, is indispensable to the gospel's being to any person a divine power effecting his salvation: and such faith in Christ, exclusive of a meritorious obedience to the law, secures the salvation of him who has it. — The apostle is evidently preparing the way to introduce the main subject of the epistle. || *To the Jew first and also to the Greek.* As *Greek* is here the contrast of *Jew*, it consequently means *Gentile*, or, rather, the *Greek* is here employed as the representative of all who are *not Jews*. Whether the believer is a Jew or a Gentile is immaterial: whoever, of any nation, reposes faith in Christ partakes of salvation. In the gospel, so far as concerns the relation to God and the principle of acceptance with him, the distinction between Jew and Gentile fades away. — To the Jew first; not through a special preference of the Jew to others on

**17 to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. FOR THEREIN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED FROM FAITH TO**

any moral ground; nor that there is any inherent recommendation of a Jew above a Gentile in the sight of God, or that faith in the gospel on the part of a Jew will more surely be acceptable to God: but the Jew is regarded as the first candidate for the blessings of the gospel, because the Jews first received the revelation of God's design to save men, and his promises of salvation. As a historical fact, salvation proceeded from the Jews. Compare John 4: 22. Rom. 9: 5. 11: 24. It was, also, the case, almost of course, as circumstances were, that the gospel was first preached to Jews, and in the cities which the apostles visited they first sought the Jewish synagogues in order to make known the Lord Jesus to their countrymen, and through them, and after making efforts in their behalf, to the Gentile population.

17 That the gospel is the power of God unto salvation appears from the fact, that it discloses God's peculiar method of justifying men; that is, of acquitting them from the charge of guilt and accepting them, or treating them as if they had not sinned, but were righteous. *For therein is revealed*, etc.; for in the gospel is disclosed, etc. A clear revelation of the way by which men could be pardoned and accepted of God, had not been previously made; it was reserved for the gospel. || *The righteousness of God*; not the personal righteousness of God, or that which belongs to him as one of his perfections; but that which he has appointed for men in order to their justification in his sight. This is called the *righteousness of God* in distinction from the idea of a righteousness consisting in obedience to the law of God and which is denominated by the apostle, in 10: 3, *one's own*

*righteousness*, also, in Phil. 3: 9, *righteousness of [from] the law*. Could this latter be justly claimed by any man, it would be the ground of his acceptance with God; since, in that case, sin could not be charged on him: but as no man has such a righteousness of his own, or a righteousness springing from the divine law, 3: 20. Gal. 2: 16, God has adopted a different method, by which he may treat men as if they were righteous. This method is called *God's righteousness*, since it has been prescribed by him and since by virtue of it he bestows the result of righteousness, namely, justification. The method and the result proceed from God: the righteousness, therefore, is called, in contrast with a personal righteousness and claim to justification, *God's righteousness*, that which he *has appointed* and that which he *puts to our account*, though we are destitute of a legal righteousness. This method of pronouncing men acquitted and of admitting them into favor with God is eminently his, and the disclosure of it is the chief distinctive feature of the gospel. It is a *reckoning of righteousness* to the account of a person who is himself destitute of righteousness, and liable to condemnation by the divine law, as a sinner; or, a putting it gratuitously to his account so that he may be accepted as if he were righteous. || *From faith to faith*. These words are not, in meaning, to be connected with the word *revealed*, but with the words *righteousness of God*. This sort of righteousness which God is pleased to put to our account, viewed particularly in its result of justification, proceeds from faith, or is an effect of faith: compare 3: 30. 10: 6. Phil. 3: 9. Faith is itself spoken of elsewhere as being this righteousness. See 4: 3, 5, 9, 22. The precise

## FAITH: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

difference between the two modes of representation is, probably, that in the latter the righteous *quality ascribed to faith* is had in view, and in the former the *result of that ascribed quality*, namely, justification, is had in view.—*To faith.* In this part of the clause the word *faith* is used probably in the way of personification, as equivalent to the expression *those who have faith, believers:* to such persons this righteousness will be ascribed, or reckoned; the benefits flowing from this method of regarding a person as righteous will be extended to them. The form of speech is kindred with that in 3 : 22, *unto all and upon all them that believe.*—The whole expression, *from faith to faith,* seems to be a twofold form of stating the same thought: this righteousness proceeds from faith and belongs to faith. It is thus a comprehensive and intensive mode of stating the principle on which God will ascribe, or impute, a justifying righteousness to man. Faith is that principle; and it is a pervading principle, the beginning and the end of man's justification in the sight of God. || *As it is written;* in Hab. 2 : 4. As harmonious with his statement relative to the principle involved in this righteousness, the apostle quotes from the Old Testament a passage which corresponds with his own language. || *The just.* The apostle's purpose, in quoting this passage, would have been more obvious, had the translation here used the words *righteous man*, and thus preserved resemblance between the expression *righteousness of God from faith* and this quotation by which Paul illustrated and confirmed his statement. The clause would then have been, *the righteous man shall live by faith;* in other words, faith is the vital element to a righteous man; from faith springs all his blessedness. A still closer connection of thought is believed, by some editors of the Greek

Testament, to exist between the apostle's words, *righteousness of God from faith*, and the quoted language, which connection they show by so arranging the punctuation as to obtain the signification, *He who is righteous from faith, or by faith, shall live.* The word *faith* being thus brought into close grammatical connection with the word *righteous*, the dependence of a righteous, or justified, state on faith as its principle, becomes more obvious. This mode of punctuation, however, though advantageous, is not free from grammatical objection; and necessity does not require it, in order to show the quotation to be available to the apostle's purpose, since in the ordinary mode of punctuation the quoted clause expresses his essential thought, namely, the vital dependence of a righteous man on faith.—The apostle quotes the passage, probably, not as containing an argument, but merely as illustrating, or as involving, the principle which is essential to the gospel. The prophet's language in the original Hebrew is variously explained: some regard the Hebrew word rendered *faith* as signifying *fidelity* to one's duties. But the apostle here quoted from the Greek translation; and the current interpretation of the passage, which was also the apostle's, and its verbal appropriateness to the apostle's thought, would give it just weight among his readers as confirming his declaration. By other writers, the prophet is understood as originally conveying the idea that while the wicked would indulge in pride, good men would put *faith* in his prophecy and thus secure a true life, a blessed state of peace.—Some commentators have regarded the words *righteousness of God* as meaning the *goodness, or clemency, of God*; but the passage from the Old Testament, produced by the apostle for illustrating and confirming his thought, makes it evident that *right-*

## 18 FOR the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all

*eousness* is the only proper rendering; also, that *righteousness* in this verse does not designate a quality of God, but something which he regards in the light of a righteousness put to man's account. || *Faith.* In the apostle's sense, faith is not mainly an intellectual belief in certain historical facts, or certain moral principles, but a corresponding *feeling of the heart*, deeply seated, permanent, and affecting the entire character. As he who believes a declaration in which his interests are deeply involved, places confidence in it and acts accordingly, so faith, in the apostle's sense, is a trusting to, or confiding in, certain declarations and arrangements of God relative to our salvation, and acting accordingly. It may be regarded both as a *state of soul* harmonious with God's declarations and arrangements, and as a *specific act* of acceding to those declarations and arrangements : regarded as a state of soul, the specific act of trusting will exist and will be, more or less distinctly, a matter of consciousness to the subject of it ; regarded as a specific act, it presupposes the state of soul which is harmonious with it. Trusting in another, whose qualities and acts warrant this trust, and whose authority is also thereby acknowledged, is the main element in genuine faith ; that is, trusting in Christ as the atoning Saviour, through whom God bestows pardon and eternal life. Faith in Christ is conjoined with a consciousness of personal sinfulness and ill desert, and with penitence ; it acknowledges Christ as a Redeemer from the condemnation and power of sin, and trusts in him as such. A man who thus believes in Christ is a disciple of Christ, relying on him for religious doctrine, for deliverance from condemnation and for spiritual influences to complete the moral renovation of the soul and make him right in the sight of God. Thus faith, or trust, is the pervading spirit

of discipleship to Christ. The gospel presupposes the sinfulness of men and the impossibility of their being accepted of God through a personal obedience to the divine law ; it is, consequently, an arrangement for the benefit of men as sinners, by which God can treat them as if righteous, and place them under the discipline of his Spirit for their complete, though gradual, recovery from sin. He will thus treat them, if with a state of soul in harmony with his arrangement, they accept his arrangement and subject themselves to it. This state of soul is that of discipleship to Christ, or of trust in him ; and this is signified by the word *faith*. The point of difference between this mode of acceptance with God and that which the apostle denominates *one's own righteousness*, or *righteousness from the law*, that is, righteousness consisting in one's deeds and procuring justification by his own works, is obvious : in the former, the person is conscious of being a sinner, condemned by the law and having in himself no ground for acceptance with God ; he is penitent and humble in view of his sins and, with self-renunciation, relies on the mercy of God in Christ for acceptance and for all spiritual blessings ; and thus he heartily assents to God's view of his character and ill desert, and confides in God's mode of deliverance from condemnation : in the latter, the person, while he may have a vague sense of sinfulness, does not feel himself to be utterly illdeserving and destitute of ability to acquire a claim on God for acceptance, and therefore he relies on deeds of his own for pardon and the favor of God. The two cases may be illustrated by our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, in Luke 18 : 9-14.

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18, etc. This peculiarity of the gospel, that faith, not legal obedience, is the essential element in the right-

## ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth

eousness by which men can be justified in the sight of God, the apostle now proceeds to establish.

In order to establish it, he brings distinctly to view the fact that men are under the displeasure, or wrath, of God on account of their sins : they are thus in a state of condemnation by the law of God and, of course, cannot be justified in his sight on the ground of obedience to that law, or by a personal righteousness of their own. Such a righteousness they have not ; but are sinners, under condemnation. Of necessity, then, they must be justified on a different ground ; and hence God has disclosed, in the gospel, his own method of justifying men ; namely, through faith in Christ which is, by the divine appointment, as really available for their acceptance with God, as a complete personal obedience to his law would have been, especially since it places the believer in union with Christ who has perfectly obeyed that law and died the just for the unjust.

1 Pet. 3 : 18.

The sinfulness of all men is, then, the first thing to be proved. The apostle commences with the case of the Gentiles, and then passes to that of the Jews. The former he easily disposes of, in 1 : 18-32, as it was so plain and was, of course, admitted by the Jews, for whose conviction mainly he was writing : the case of the Jews he argues more at length, taking up the various objections which, he knew, would arise in a Jew's mind, particularly as to the consequence which results from the truth that Jews, too, are sinners, in chapters 2-4. This is the chief point with the apostle ; namely, to show that Jews, though specially favored of God with knowledge of his will, cannot reasonably hope for justification on the ground of obedience to the divine law. It is important to keep this thought in mind as being really the principal point, since it will help to

elucidate some items in the argument which would not otherwise appear so necessary, or so convincing. Besides, if this point be established, a principle is evidently involved, which would be applicable to *all* men ; namely, if Jews, even, to whom the law of God, both moral and ritual, has been given, cannot be justified on the ground of that law, of course those who have not had the advantage of a religious code from heaven cannot be justified on the ground of personal obedience. Moreover, the Jews indulged the thought, that the only way for Gentiles to find acceptance with God was, to embrace Judaism and live according to its prescriptions : but, if even Jews themselves must be saved on a different ground, of course the estimate of Judaism must be lowered, and God's method of justification, through faith in Christ, be regarded as the all-sufficient and the only ground of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles.

18. *For the wrath of God* ; his displeasure, including the judgments which that displeasure leads him to inflict. || *Is revealed from heaven* ; has been made manifest from heaven, where God is conceived of as dwelling ; the manifestation, then, has been made by God himself. || *Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. *Ungodliness* relates particularly to men's spirit and conduct towards God ; *unrighteousness* has respect to all the moral relations of men generally and expresses their lack of conformity to what is just and right. The two terms are here combined in order to present more fully and intensively the ground of God's displeasure against men. || *Who hold the truth in unrighteousness* ; who possess the truth which would naturally lead to righteousness, but live, notwithstanding, in unrighteousness. They know the right, but pursue the wrong : they possess the truth, but do not allow it to govern them.—A prefer-

19 in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God hath showed it unto them ;  
 20 for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse : because that when they knew God, they

able version of this clause, in the judgment of eminent interpreters, is, *who hinder the truth by unrighteousness* ; hinder it, by their unrighteous propensities, from producing its appropriate effects, repress its legitimate influences. Their wickedness prompts them to disobey the truth and to make it powerless.—Many of the erroneous opinions of men concerning God and their moral relations spring from a sinful inclination.—How is this revelation of God's wrath against men's unrighteousness made ? The apostle does not probably allude to any declarations of God to men in the Old Testament, since he is speaking of the heathen. He may have reference to the testimony of God in men's consciences ; but more probably, to the actual manifestation of his wrath in giving up men to their perverse inclinations and allowing them to involve themselves in all the pollution and misery to which idolatry, in a particular manner, leads. The illustration of the apostle's remark by the judgments with which God visited idolatrous nations commences at the 24th verse.—The 18th verse seems to be a statement applicable to all men, though made with special reference to the heathen world who had so widely departed from the truth which God had made accessible to all. The verse contains two distinct thoughts concerning men : first, that they possess a knowledge of religious truth ; next, that they disregard it, or hinder its proper influence by their wickedness. The first of these he confirms in verses 19 and 20 ; and the second, in verses 21–23 ; the result of their disregarding the truth, namely, the wrath of God, his punitive judgments, he begins to unfold in the 24th verse.

19. Knowledge respecting God has been given to men.—*That which may be known of God* ; not all which is capable of being known, or which men are capable of receiving. The expression is equivalent to *knowledge of God*, concerning his existence, his relation to men as their Creator, and his consequent claims on them. || *Is manifest in them* ; in their souls. The apostle speaks not of philosophers merely, but of the people in general ; and indicates the conviction, which arises in the human soul, of the existence of God and of men's obligation to him. || *God hath showed it unto them* ; by his works which evince a Creator, as the apostle immediately explains.

20. *The invisible things of him* ; his perfections and supremacy. These are things not to be perceived by the eye, but to be apprehended by the mind. || *From the creation of the world* ; from the date of the creation, ever since the work of creation. || *Are clearly seen*, etc., though invisible, and not of a nature to come under the observation of the eye, yet they are clearly manifested to the mind, being apprehended by means of God's works. Compare Ps. 19 : 1. || *Even his eternal power and Godhead*. These are the *invisible things of him*. His eternal power is here specified as manifested in creation and in the upholding of all things. *Godhead*, or Deity, comprehends the qualities of God generally which are impressed on the human mind by the work of creation and providence. || *So that they are without excuse*. This manifestation of eternal power and Deity leaves men without excuse for their ignorance of God, and their sinful indulgences.

21 glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them 24 up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed 25 the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which

21. The apostle next shows that the unrighteousness of men led them to disregard the knowledge which they had of God.—*They glorified him not as God*, etc.; they did not honor him as the true God, nor thankfully acknowledge him as the giver of all good. They framed vain and silly conceptions of God, refusing to admit into their minds the light of truth.

22. 23. *Professing themselves to be wise*, etc. Reference is here had, not only to the philosophers, but to the educated generally among the heathen. With all their mental cultivation and their pretensions to wisdom, they were foolish as to religious matters. The wisdom of the world proved itself folly. Compare 1 Cor. 1: 21. The professedly wise, instead of admiring and adoring the glory of God to whose nature nothing corruptible, or perishable, belongs, paid honors to images resembling perishable men, birds, fourfooted beasts and serpents. So deeply debased had the human mind at length become as to rank mortal creatures among objects of adoration. || *Changed the glory*, etc.; exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image like to mortal man.—The fourfold division, here given, may have been a current division of living creatures; or, it may have denoted various objects of idolatry among various nations. The Greeks and Romans employed images

in human form for idolatrous purposes; other nations, the Egyptians for example, paid divine honors to the other objects here mentioned.

24. The foolish views of God, which the heathen had adopted, and the practice of idolatry had led to their appropriate results in still further debasing men and making them victims of shameless lewdness and pollution. To this they were abandoned by the judgment of God.—Idolatry is generally connected with gross licentiousness.

25. The debasement, to which the Gentiles had been left, led the apostle again to advert to the cause of their having been judicially given up.—*Who changed the truth*, etc.; who exchanged the truth concerning God for a lie; or, exchanged the true God for lying vanities, for idols, paying homage to created things in preference to the Creator. || *Who is blessed forever*; rather, who is worthy to be praised and spoken gloriously of forever.—With a holy indignation at the perversion which men had made of God's revelation of himself in the work of creation, and at the pollution to which idolatry had debased them, the apostle utters an ascription of praise to the living God of truth and holiness.

26—32. A more detailed view now follows of the debasement and misery to which the Gentiles were given up

27 is against nature : and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another ; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error  
 28 which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate  
 29 mind to do those things which are not convenient : being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit,  
 30 malignity ; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to  
 31 parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful : who knowing the  
 32 judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

in consequence of their forsaking the true God and practising idolatry. All kinds of vice sprung from the reprobate mind to which God gave them up.

27. *Their error*; their moral error, their wickedness.

28. *As they did not like to retain God*, etc. They disliked his character and rejected him : he consequently gave them over to a mind which he must dislike, and left that reprobate mind to the consequences of its own foolish choices. || *Not convenient*; not suitable : a delicate mode of saying *abominable*.

29. *Whisperers*; slanderers in secret; or, those who merely *whisper* their malice.

32. *Have pleasure in them that do them*: an additional mark of moral debasement. Besides indulging in practices which they know God ab-

hors, they also approve of persons who indulge in the same practices. However sinful a man may be, he disapproves commonly of those who indulge in the same excesses as himself.

Such was the picture of the Gentile world. The description was not intended, however, to be applicable in every particular to every individual; but it was generally applicable : some were chargeable with some of these sins and some with others, while yet all these sins were abundantly practised. Exceptions, doubtless, there were ; and the apostle seems to allow, in 2 : 14, 15, that some of the Gentiles strove to obey the moral law of their being. These very persons, however, would be among the first to acknowledge the prevailing sinfulness and would be painfully conscious of something wrong in themselves.

## CHAPTER II.

**Righteousness of God in his retributions to men, 1-16. Sinfulness of the Jews, 17-24.  
The heart, the seat of genuine piety, 25-29.**

**1 THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest : for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest, doest the same things.**

### CHAPTER II.

Gentiles, it would be granted by the Jews, are under condemnation, as sinners. But how stands the case with Jews ? If the Jews, too, notwithstanding their superior advantages, are transgressors and are guilty of sins similar to those of the Gentiles, their hope of being accepted in the sight of God by virtue of their being Jews and their punctilious observance of religious requisitions, must be abandoned ; and for them, as well as for Gentiles, the ground of justification must be the special method made known in the gospel. The apostle, therefore, next proceeds to consider the case of Jews as to the question of their sinfulness and the ground on which they were hoping for justification.

Every Jew would at once pronounce condemnation on the Gentiles for the sins which had just been mentioned. The apostle, then, takes advantage of the judgment, which every Jew would thus pass, to bring a charge of inexcusable guilt on the Jews themselves ; for they were guilty of the same sins. He makes a direct assertion of this fact ; and on the strength of it prepares the way for the conclusion that Jews, as well as Gentiles, are under condemnation.— His purpose requires him to establish the righteousness of God in his retributive treatment of men, whether Gentiles or Jews, vs. 1-16. He then exposes the resemblance, in point, of moral conduct, of the Jews to the Gentiles, 17-24 ; and insists on the spiritual character of genuine piety, 25-29.

The apostle has, evidently, before his mind a Jew whom he considers as passing judgment on the Gentiles : for he now leaves the case of the Gentiles and turns to those who would unite with him in condemning them ; and such were the Jews, here represented by an individual. He does not attempt to conceal his purpose to show that Jews, also, are in a state of sin and condemnation ; for he very soon distinctly mentions them. He asserts at the outset that the person, whom he introduces as condemning the Gentiles, is doing the same things. The case is not stated as a hypothetical one : the positive assertion is made, as one which cannot be questioned, that the person, now in his eye, commits the same deeds. He pronounces it absurd for such a one to think of escaping the righteous judgment of God. The force of his statements consists very much in the self-conviction which would arise in the mind of such a man, when he should look at the naked facts and place them by the side of the impartial moral principle which must regulate the coming retribution.

*1. Whosoever thou art that judgest.* The original is very emphatic—*O man, every one judging*, that is, judging the Gentiles : thou condemnest thyself ; because while thou judgest those who do these things, thou thyself doest the same. The apostle does not say, *If thou do the same things*, as though he were making a supposition so as to gain assent to a moral principle, before his purpose to apply it was perceived, and then to show that the Jews were actually

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to  
 3 truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of  
 4 God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness  
 5 and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment

chargeable with the same sins. He makes the assertion as an indisputable one, and applies it in proof that they were under condemnation; since, if God did not regard them as under condemnation, he would not be true to his principles. — The charge here made does not require for its support, that precisely all and the same immorality and excesses should be found among the Jews, as among the Gentiles; but that transgressions of the same kind existed among them, and that they were as really guilty, as the Gentiles, of disregarding the will of God and of doing things which were, equally with the sinful practices of Gentiles, violations of the divine law.

2. *But we are sure*, etc. It is a settled point with us, that the sentence which God passes on those who do such things accords with truth; it is a perfectly right sentence, such as a true view of the case requires. In this, God is faithful to his holy character and government.

3. *And thinkest thou this*, etc. Thinkest thou that thou, who doest the very things which thou condemnest in others, shalt escape the judgment of a righteous God? How absurd! how subversive of all justice! The Jews did virtually indulge such a thought, cherishing a mistaken reliance on their descent from Abraham and on the covenant of God with him. Compare Matt. 3: 7-9. Yet by placing the matter on the ground of common sense and conscience, the apostle would show how futile was such a thought.

4. *Or despisest thou*, etc. Changing the ground from that of simple justice to that of gratitude and a proper use of advantages, he would more fully expose the futility of the Jewish view. — Thou hast, as a Jew, been peculiarly favored of God, having largely enjoyed his goodness and forbearance; and dost thou overlook all this goodness and the design of God to lead thee, thereby, to repentance? — The Jews had shown an insensibility to their obligations and slighted, so far as its real purpose was concerned, the distinguishing goodness of God towards them.

5. *But after thy hardness*, etc. The apostle here urges on the Jews the inevitable result of such insensibility to the special goodness of God. A day of righteous retribution will come, when God will render to every one according to his *deeds*, not according to his nationality or parentage; according to his *obligations*, not his baseless hopes. This result comes from the very nature of things, and from the rectitude of God's retribution. || *Day of wrath*; the appointed time when the wrath of God against the wicked will be displayed. That wrath is now threatened; and though doubts concerning it are often expressed, it will in due time be executed. || *Revelation of the righteous judgment of God*. The final judgment is here meant, which will fully disclose the righteousness of God in his rejection, or his acceptance, of men, respectively, according to their characters.

6 of God, who will render to every man according to his  
 7 deeds : to them who by patient continuance in well doing,  
   seek for glory, and honor, and immortality : eternal life : but  
 8 unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth,  
 9 but obey unrighteousness : indignation and wrath, tribulation  
   and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the  
 10 Jew first, and also of the Gentile : but glory, honor, and  
   peace, to every man that worketh good ; to the Jew first, and  
 11 also to the Gentile : for there is no respect of persons with  
 12 God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also

6-8. *Who will render*, etc. God ishment. Compare 1: 16. In the will, without distinction of nations or regard to external circumstances, render eternal life to those who through persevering obedience to him are seeking for future glory ; but his indignation and wrath will fall on those, of whatever nation, who are rebellious against him and disobey the truth. || *Eternal life*. These words are grammatically dependent on the verb *render*.—The terms *glory*, *honor* and *immortality* are here impressively grouped together, as conveying substantially the same idea in some what different aspects, namely, the *glory* of heavenly perfection, the *honor* of being approved and rewarded by God, the *immortal, deathless*, state of heaven. These are all combined in *eternal life*. || *Them that are contentious* ; rebellious against God.

9, 10. *Tribulation*, etc. A peculiarly solemn repetition of the same great truth, with the distinct declaration that it is applicable both to Jews and to Gentiles : utter misery on the doers of evil, glory and bliss for the doers of good, whether Jews or Gentiles. Yet to the Jew first, because he had pre-eminence above the Gentiles in being favored with a revelation from God.—The word *first* here sets before the mind the Jews and the Gentiles respectively, as two communities : of these, the Jews had been the more highly favored as to moral advantages and might therefore be regarded as first to be dealt with, whether for reward or for pun-

ishment. Compare 1: 16. In the verse before us, as in 1: 16, the original has the word which means *Greek*; but it is obviously equivalent to *Gentile*. The very extensive spread of the Greek language and customs in the apostle's time accounts for this comprehensive use of the word.

11. *For there is no respect of persons*, etc. The ground of this disregard of the outward distinction between Jew and Gentile in men's final award, is the impartiality of God : he does not respect persons in judgment, but looks at the heart and the deeds.

12. *For as many as have sinned*, etc. In confirmation of the truth that God has no respect of persons, or is not partial, in judgment, and that he treats men according to the demands of right, without favoritism, the apostle affirms that God, in passing judgment on those who have sinned, will treat them according to the degree of light which they have had : those who have sinned without the advantage of the revealed law, or the revelation from heaven by Moses, making known the will of God, will not be condemned by that law ; though they will perish, their doom will not proceed from that law, and will not have the aggravations which will be felt by those who have sinned, and who perish notwithstanding their possession of the law : but those who, possessing that law, have lived in sin, will be condemned by it. Thus it is not as *Gentiles* that any

perish without law : and as many as have sinned in the law,  
 13 shall be judged by the law, (for not the hearers of the law  
*are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justi-  
 14 fied. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by  
 nature the things contained in the law, these having not the  
 15 law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the  
 law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing wit-  
 ness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing, or else ex-

will be rejected, but as sinners, whe-  
 ther Jews or Gentiles, and their  
 doom, respectively, will accord with  
 the measure of light which they had.  
 As the apostle had the case of Jews  
 and Gentiles before his mind, it seems  
 most congruous to regard him as re-  
 ferring particularly to the revelation  
 made to the Jews, that is, to the  
 Mosaic law, or the Mosaic religious  
 institute. A general principle is,  
 of course, involved which will apply  
 in all parallel cases.

13. *For not the hearers, etc.* As  
 illustrating and sustaining the idea,  
 that the possession of the law, or the  
 religious institution, which God had  
 revealed, will not secure acceptance  
 with God, the apostle suggests the  
 thought that, in order to attain the  
 blessings which the law promised, it  
 was not sufficient to have the law  
 and to know its directions ; but it  
 was necessary to obey it : not those  
 who merely hear the law are held as  
 righteous before God, but those who  
 obey it. The apostle is here stating  
 a universal principle as to the claims  
 of a law, or a religious institution,  
 and the condition on which those  
 who have it may, by means of it, be  
 held and treated as righteous ; namely,  
 obeying it. This holds true both  
 in respect to a legal institution and  
 in respect to the gospel. Each re-  
 quires obedience in order to salvation.  
 A law must be obeyed, if those who  
 have it would be saved by it ; the  
 revelation in the Old Testament must  
 be obeyed, if those who have it would  
 be saved by it ; the gospel must be  
 obeyed, if those who have it would  
 be saved by it. It was not, however,

in this connection, the apostle's pur-  
 pose to state the evangelical prin-  
 ciple of salvation, in distinction from  
 the legal.

14, 15. *For when the Gentiles, etc.*  
 That not mere knowledge of the  
 written law is sufficient to secure its  
 blessings, but that compliance with  
 its demands is requisite, and that any  
 who obey the degree of moral light  
 which has been given them will en-  
 joy the blessings of obedience to the  
 law, is obvious from the fact, that  
 even the Gentiles, who have not the  
 law, but, by the force of natural reason  
 and conscience, act in harmony with  
 the law, do yet possess a law as really  
 as the Jews, though not to the same  
 extent : they feel the influence and  
 enjoy the benefits of a law. They  
 are, through the divine constitution  
 of man's nature, a law to themselves ;  
 they have a law written on their  
 hearts. This is manifest from their  
 having within them a consciousness  
 of self-approval, or of self-condem-  
 nation, according as they have obeyed,  
 or violated, the inward law, the  
 law of their moral nature. It is evi-  
 dently, then, the *doers* of the law of  
 God who enjoy its blessings, and not  
 merely the *hearers* of it : so far as the  
 heathen do, by nature, the things  
 which it enjoins, they enjoy its bless-  
 ings as well as do those Jews who  
 obey. Thus it is not the Jews alone,  
 who have a law ; the Gentiles also  
 have the same law essentially, and  
 are a law to themselves, though they  
 know not Moses as a lawgiver.—The  
 impartiality of God is thus manifest  
 in judging men either by the written  
 law, or by the inward unwritten law,

16 cusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.  
 17 BEHOLD, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest *his* will, and approvest

according as they have had the one, or only the other. That the requisitions of the divine law are inscribed on the Gentiles' hearts, and thus that they have a law, is evident; since their conscience bears a joint testimony with that law, and their reflections on their deeds either accuse them of guilt, or defend them against the suspicion of guilt: their thoughts incline this way and that, accusing and excusing, according as conscience disapproves, or allows.—The idea of a contest among the thoughts of the heathen may also be conveyed by the apostle; their thoughts, or reasonings, alternately accusing, or defending, according as conscience, or as inclination, prevails. || *By nature*; that is, by the light of natural reason and the impulse of conscience, the higher principles of our nature. It may not be amiss to remark, that while, in the case here stated by the apostle, nature, that is, natural reason and conscience, prompts to obedience, in the case stated in Eph. 2: 3 nature, that is, natural inclination, prompts to disobedience. || *The work of the law*; that which the law requires; an expression of the same import as *the things contained in the law*.

16. *In the day*, etc. This verse is to be connected, in sense, with the 12th, as an addition to the thought there expressed. || *Secrets*; the secret acts, the purposes and affections of men. These are all open and naked to the sight of God: deeds both open and concealed, purposes and feelings, will be brought into judgment. Thus the extent, the strictness, and the exact justice of the final sentence are indicated. || *According to my gospel*; the gospel which I preach. In this clause, reference is particularly had to the statement which precedes it, that the judg-

ment will be conducted by Christ. Compare Matt. 25: 31-46. John 5: 22. 2 Cor. 5: 10.

17-29. Having thus shown the impartiality of God in his judgment of men, whether Jews or Gentiles, the apostle now returns to the assertion which he had made concerning the Jews, that they did the things which they condemned in the Gentiles. In order to give this the greater effect, he reminds them of the eminent moral position in which they regarded themselves as standing, and of their superiority in point of religious knowledge. He then, by a series of pertinent questions, appeals to their own consciousness, and to their lives, as bearing testimony to that assertion and showing how singularly inconsistent and inexcusable were their sins. Without designing to intimate that it was of no benefit to be a Jew, he proceeds to affirm that their boasted privileges, having been abused, are of no avail in securing eternal life, and that only genuine uprightness of heart towards God will be accepted by him.

17. *Thou art called a Jew*; thou bearest the name of Jew. To be a Jew was to have the honor of belonging to the descendants of Abraham, the favored race, distinguished from the corrupt Gentile world, by privileges which God had bestowed. || *Restest in the law*; confidest in the law, the religious system given by God through Moses; trustest in that, as an assurance of the divine favor. The Jews prided themselves on their possessing the religious institution which God had revealed, as well as on their knowledge of God and their relation to him as his people. || *Makest thy boast of God*; boastest of God as specially pledged to bless and save Jews.

18 the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of  
 19 the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of  
 20 the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor  
 of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of  
 21 knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which  
 teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preach-  
 22 est, a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest,  
 a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adul-  
 tery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

18. *Knowest his will; the will of God as communicated in the Old Testament.* || *Approuwest the things that are more excellent; or, as some translate, trues things that differ, or distinguishest between things that differ; that is, makest moral distinctions more exactly than other people, discriminating between what it is proper and what it is not proper to do, between what is pleasing and what is displeasing to God.* The ground of the ability to discriminate is, that a Jew is *instructed out of the law of God.* Great care was taken to instruct Jewish children in all the peculiarities of the nation, as to history and religion; and provision was made by the occurrence of festivals and the religious exercises connected with them, as well as by more private methods, and by frequent religious acts, personal, domestic and public, to keep the people acquainted with the divine dealings and requisitions.

19, 20. *And art confident, etc.* The Jews took not a little pride in comparing themselves with Gentiles, in respect to religion. They regarded the Gentiles, in comparison with themselves, as blind, in darkness, mere children, and fools: but they had, in their law, knowledge and truth respecting God brought into form and system; their law was the embodiment of religious knowledge and truth.

21, 22. Thus favorably situated, according to their own acknowledgment, and in their own esteem, what, notwithstanding, was the fact in regard to their conduct? — *Teachest*

*thou not thyself?* They failed rightly to apprehend and to learn for themselves the instructions of which they boasted. Enjoining on others the prohibition to steal, they were themselves guilty of stealing. So in the case of adultery and kindred sins. || *Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?* The fundamental idea in this inquiry is not perfectly obvious. As robbing from sacred places of articles belonging to them was a form of sacrilege, some suppose the apostle here charges on the Jews the commission of sacrilege by robbing God of what belonged to him, namely, requisite honor and obedience. The worship of idols detracted from the honor of the name of God, and was therefore abhorred by the Jews; yet they themselves grossly detracted from that honor. Others explain the question more literally: they suppose that Jews were in the habit of visiting idolatrous temples and purloining valuable articles which had been left there in honor of the gods of those temples: thus, though they professed to abhor idols, they would gladly visit idol temples and commit sacrilege, turning idolatry to their personal account and cherishing a secret pleasure in idolatry. — This latter view of the passage seems most in harmony with the connected passages; since they present actual contrasts. It would be more satisfactory, however, if historical evidence could be found that Jews did, sometimes, at least, visit idolatrous temples for such a purpose. In favor of this view, it is to

23 thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you ; as it is written.  
 24 25 **For** circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law ; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by 28 the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law ? For he

be said that the expression, *robbers of churches*, more correctly, *robbers of temples*, is given as the translation of the kindred noun in the only passage of the New Testament where it occurs, Acts 19 : 37. It is also worthy of notice that one of the laws of Moses, Deut. 7 : 25, prohibits taking off from idols the silver and gold which might be found on them. This implies that in the days of Moses the Jews were exposed to the temptation of appropriating to themselves such treasures ; and though this prohibition may have had respect to idols which had in some way fallen into their possession, yet in subsequent times purloining from idol-temples may have been practised. Josephus in his Antiquities of the Jews, iv. 8. 10. gives, as one of the regulations of Moses, the following :— “ Nor may any one steal what belongs to strange temples ; nor take away the gifts that are dedicated to any god ; ” a prohibition, which whether rightly traced to Moses or not, implies the existence of the practice which it forbids.

23, 24. *Thou that makest thy boast of the law*, etc. Though they made a boast of possessing the revealed law of God, yet they dishonored him by their notorious transgressions of it, and virtually exemplified a declaration in their own scriptures, Is. 52 : 5, that by their vices the name of God was reviled among the heathen.— This quotation is taken from the Greek translation of the Hebrew

scriptures, so much in use among the Jews in the apostle’s days, and is specially applicable to his purpose by the verbal addition made in that translation.

It was not necessary for the apostle to enter with greater detail on the evidence of his position, that the Jews did the same things as the Gentiles. By a few comprehensive questions, he could awaken attention and give a right direction to the reflections of the considerate. Enough was said to produce conviction that the Jews were sinners, as well as the Gentiles.

25-27. *For circumcision verily profiteth*, etc. The Jews placed great reliance on circumcision, as the sign of their being in covenant with God. The apostle now wished to forestall an objection which would arise in the mind of a Jew ; namely, that he made no account of this ordinance and that, according to his view, it was of no advantage to be a Jew. He affirms, that circumcision in itself is of no avail ; it must, in order to be of efficacy in securing the favor of God, be connected with a spiritual obedience to the religious institute which enjoined it. The requisitions of God have respect to the spirit of man : his heart must be right, in order that he may be accepted of God. A Jew who should live in violation of the religious temper enjoined in his scriptures might just as well be a Gentile, so far as possession of the divine favor is concerned. If

29 is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: neither is *that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is *that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter: whose praise is not of men, but of God.

### CHAPTER III.

*Objections*, or queries, in regard to the alleged sinfulness of the Jews, 1-8. Testimony of the Jewish scriptures to the sinfulness of Jews and Gentiles, 9-18. The righteous principle which God observes in his treatment of men, and the impossibility of any man's being justified through a legal obedience, 19, 20. The righteousness which is available to men's justification, 21-26. The boasting of the Jews inadmissible, 27-30; yet the law not invalidated by faith, 31.

a Gentile have an obedient spirit, he will receive from God as favorable treatment as if he were a Jew; and though uncircumcised and having no outward sign of a covenant-relation to God, his obedience would condemn the Jew who, favored with the written law and being circumcised, should live in transgression of the law. In other words, circumcision merely and the mere possession of the law of God, or of the system of religion revealed by him, are of no account in his sight. He requires an obedient spirit, inward piety.

28, 29. *For he is not a Jew, etc.* The ground of the view that God accepts a pious Gentile and rejects a disobedient Jew is, that a genuine Jew, one whom God will acknowledge as such, is a Jew in heart; and circumcision, to be acceptable, must be inward, that of the spirit. Compare Deut. 10: 16. Jer. 4: 4. The external-obedience presupposes a corresponding temper of heart, conformed to the divine will. God looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart: not what man praises has true worth, but what God approves. || *Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter*; spiritual circumcision, the obedience of the heart, not merely an outward compliance with a written precept; but inward, as is the spirit of a man, not a mere outward thing, as is the let-

ter of a law, or a written precept. || *Whose praise*: the word *whose* relates here, according to the original, to the word *Jew*. The thought of the apostle, however, is equally applicable to circumcision, and, of course, to any act of outward obedience. — These spiritual views of religion, though harmonious with those presented in various parts of the Old Testament, had been greatly overlooked, and had nearly, or quite, faded away from the Jewish mind. Religion had become a matter of form and ceremony: and yet the Jews relied on this external religion with an assurance that it would avail to their salvation. The apostle directly and earnestly assailed the pride of the Jews in their external formal religion, and made prominent the nature of true religion, as spiritual, and quite independent of circumcision, or any mere ritual observances.

### CHAPTER III.

The apostle had distinctly denied to the Jew, as such, any moral pre-eminence above the Gentile: the one was a sinner as well as the other. This view, placing both Gentiles and Jews on a common level, as to the fact of being sinners, and asserting the uselessness, for acceptance with God, of the external observance of circumcision, would naturally raise

objections in the minds of Jews, since it was so different from the view then prevalent among them. Before he closes up, therefore, his argument in proof of the sinfulness of the Jews and presents the inference resulting from it in regard to justification, he pauses in order to remove such objections.

We need not conceive of the apostle as introducing an objector and conducting a dialogue with him : he rather, as he knew the Jewish mind, states substantially what a Jew might be expected to say. The queries proposed are founded on external views of religion, and on an abuse of the covenant relation in which God had stood to the Jewish people. The chief question is, Of what advantage, then, is it to be a Jew rather than a Gentile ? The reply to this suggested another query concerning the faithfulness of God to his engagements : and the reply to this latter suggested, in its turn, another concerning the justice of God, should he inflict wrath on the Jews. The reply to this is followed by another query which calls in question the rightfulness of condemning an unfaithful Jew, as if he were to be classed with ordinary sinners, or with Gentile sinners. Vs. 1-8.

Declarations of the Jewish scriptures are next adduced to confirm the charge that both Jews and Gentiles are sinners, 9-18, and the righteous principle which regulates the judicial retributions of God is stated, as also the conclusion, that no man can be justified through the law, 19, 20.—The righteousness which is available with God for justification is then announced, and the ground of it exhibited, 21-25.—The boasting in which the Jews indulged is shown to be baseless, 27-30 ; yet the law is not invalidated by faith, 31.

In order to apprehend the import of the objections, rather cavils, presented and disposed of in verses 1-8, we must consider, that the Jews had come to regard the promises of divine favor and eternal life to the posterity

of Abraham as dependent on their observance of circumcision, particularly, and of the other prescriptions of the Mosaic ritual ; but these promises they held to be otherwise unconditional, so that they would be, of course, fulfilled to all Jews whether faithful, or not, to the spiritual requisitions of the Mosaic religion. It was the privilege of a Jew, they thought, to be one of the chosen people of God and hence to be interested in divine promises which would not fail : Jews, therefore, were not to be treated, in the divine administration, like Gentiles, whom they branded with the name of sinners. Compare Matt. 3 : 9. John 8 : 33-40. Rom. 2 : 17. 9 : 4. They could not rid themselves of the thought that, if they were circumcised, it would be unjust in God to withhold from them eternal life and to treat them as he would uncircumcised sinners of the Gentiles : though Jews should be unfaithful, still God would in all faithfulness fulfil his part of the covenant engagements and bestow eternal life ; the righteousness and veracity of God would even become more glorious by his being constant to his covenant and blessing his chosen people, though they should be unrighteous and false. The profane thought, even, was cherished that, even though they should be unrighteous and false, God would not have fair ground for proceeding against them as sinners ; since by adhering to his engagements he would have the benefit of more signally illustrating his righteousness and veracity : he would by this glorifying of himself not only have an ample equivalent, on his side, for their unfaithfulness, but even be seen in a more advantageous light. They flattered themselves that they had a regard for the honor of God and seemed to cherish a fear that, by refusing to them eternal life, he would impair his own glory. Thus even their acknowledged wickedness furnished them an additional ground for presumption.

1   WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is  
 2   there of circumcision? Much, every way: chiefly, because  
 3   that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

4   For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief  
 make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let  
 God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That  
 thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest over-  
 come when thou art judged.

1. *What advantage, then, hath the Jew, etc.* This is the language of objection.—Wherein, then, is the Jew more favorably situated than the Gentile? And what is the profit of circumcision? The former of the two questions is the main one, and that which receives an answer: the second is subordinate, and did not require immediate attention. The apostle had, indeed, explicitly avowed, 2 : 25-29, the utter inefficacy, for acceptance with God, of outward circumcision.

2. *Much, every way;* much, in every respect pertaining to religion. In what pertained to religion, a Jew was far more favorably situated than a Gentile. || *Chiefly,* etc. The chief point of advantage was, that the Jews were entrusted with the *oracles of God*; that is, his promises to Abraham and the other patriarchs, and all the revelations of the divine will through Moses and the prophets.

3. *For what if some did not believe?* Another objection to the apostle's views is here introduced.—Some editions of the Greek Testament punctuate this verse differently from the mode adopted in our version: the words *believe, unbelief, faith*, also, do not convey the original idea. The verse may be thus rendered:—*For what? If some have been unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness make void the faithfulness of God?*—Jews, generally, indulged the thought that God was pledged, by his engagement with Abraham, to bless them. Hence the query, Though some of the Jews have proved faithless, will their faithlessness to their obligations destroy the faithfulness of God to his prom-

ises? Though we are sinners, will God be faithless to his engagements?

4. *God forbid.* These words are not a literal rendering of the original; but seem to have been adopted by the translators as expressive of the pious decision with which the apostle would repel the cavilling query. A literal rendering would be, *Let it not be:* an expression strongly indicative of aversion and showing how abhorrent the apostle regarded the query to every right feeling. In replying, then, to the thought advanced in objection to his view, Paul repels with abhorrence the insinuation, that God would be faithless should he not save the Jews; and at the same time, by a quotation from their own scriptures, maintains that in condemning the unfaithful, God would be acknowledged to be just. || *Yea, let God be true, etc.* So far from calling in question the faithfulness of God, let us hold it as a fixed principle, never to be surrendered, that *God* is true, of unimpeachable veracity, though *every man* should prove false, faithless to his engagements. || *As it is written, etc.* The sentiment just expressed is confirmed by a quotation from Ps. 51 : 4, to the effect that God will be proved righteous in all his declarations, that, were his dealings brought under a judicial examination, he would gain the cause and be pronounced just.—The quotation from the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures is verbally different from the original in the Old Testament, but is apposite to the purpose of showing that God will invariably be found just and true: it

5     But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh  
6     vengeance? (I speak as a man.) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?  
7     For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

conveys, also, the thought that, in such a trial, God would not only be cleared, but that his righteous character would be triumphantly displayed.

5. Another objection is brought against the sentiment that Jews, as well as Gentiles, might be objects of divine wrath. It is grounded on a professed regard for the glory of God and on the assumption, that his righteousness would be impaired should he inflict wrath on the Jews. The purport of it is, If the unrighteousness of the Jews occasion to God the advantage of signalizing glorifying himself as righteous in adhering, notwithstanding their unrighteousness, to his covenant engagements and in blessing them, will God be unrighteous and, instead of bestowing on them eternal life, inflict wrath on them? — *If our unrighteousness commend*, etc.; if our unrighteousness set forth in a favorable light the righteousness, or justice, of God.—The words *righteousness of God*, being here contrasted with *our unrighteousness*, mean the personal righteousness of God, and correspond to the expression in the preceding verse that thou mightest be justified, or shown to be just. || *Is God unrighteous*, etc. Is God, or will God be, unrighteous and inflict wrath, instead of bestowing on us eternal life and thus glorifying his righteousness in keeping his covenant? || *Taketh vengeance*; literally, *inflicteth wrath*. || *I speak as a man*. The query was not at all expressive of the apostle's own mind: he spoke as personating another, or, as some may might think and speak.

6. *For then how shall God judge the world?* The thought, that God is unrighteous, would be inconsistent

with the belief held among the Jews, that God is to judge the world. The Judge of the world must discriminate in regard to the characters and deserts of men; and thus the acknowledged truth, that God is to judge the world, involves the idea of his personal justice.

7. The cavilling objector proposes another query, similar to the one just disposed of, an illustration, indeed, of it, but carried to a greater length: If the veracity of God in adhering to his engagements be, through my falseness, more abundantly glorified, why am I also, a Jew whom God has engaged to bless and by blessing whom, though I be false to my engagements, he may so much the more glorify his veracity, why am I also, like the sinful Gentile world, brought to trial as a sinner? God would glorify his veracity by bestowing eternal life on me, though false to my engagements, and even by occasion of my falseness: why then, notwithstanding this advantage to himself, am I brought to trial as a sinner? — *The truth of God*; the truthfulness, or veracity, of God. || *My lie*; my falsehood to God, my falseness, faithlessness. || *Why yet am I also judged*, etc. The word *also* seems to refer to other persons who are expected to be brought to judgment; and it may have a reference to the thought, in the preceding verse, that God is to judge *the world*, since by this term the Jews meant, more particularly, the Gentile world, and some of them seem to have believed that the judgment was designed solely for the Gentiles. The query of the objector may be thus presented: Why am even I, as if a sinner of the Gentiles, or as a

8 And not *rather* (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

9 What then? are we better than *they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they 10 are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no 11 not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that 12 seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good,

sinner, like the Gentile world, still held to trial?

8. This verse contains the reply to the question in the seventh. The apostle seems to interrupt the cavalier, and bring him on a sudden to consider the extreme to which he had gone; as if the apostle had said, 'And not rather say (as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil that good may come! Shall we say that?' — The original may be variously rendered: thus, And shall we say (as . . . some affirm that we say), that we may do evil that good may come? — or thus, And, let us not do (as . . . some affirm we say we may do) evil that good may come. || *We be slanderously reported*, etc. Doubtless some of Paul's opponents had made such an affirmation concerning him, abusing perhaps some of his avowed sentiments, and drawing from them unauthorized inferences. The sentiment which occurs in this epistle, 5: 20, Where sin abounded grace did much more abound, may exemplify the class of thoughts which his adversaries thus abused. || *Whose damnation is just*. This is affirmed of those who act on the principle of doing evil that good may come; not of those who reviled the apostle. Those who act thus, he solemnly affirms, will meet with a righteous condemnation.

9-18. Having shown what advantage the Jew had over the Gentile, and disposed of the questionings which a Jew would suggest in opposition to the sentiment that he, like

any sinner, was exposed to the wrath of God, the apostle now puts directly the question, whether Jews were better than Gentiles, as to the fact of being sinners. This was, in truth, the point to which he had been steadily looking. He denies that Jews are, at all, better than Gentiles in this respect: they are both under sin, as he had already, in 1: 18-32. 2: 1-29, charged on them. His charge, he proceeds to show, is in harmony with the Jewish scriptures themselves.— This argument from the Jewish scriptures, doubtless, had special reference to the case of the Jews, since no one had doubts whether the Gentiles were sinners, while yet the passages speak in general terms, and are evidently produced in support of the charge that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin.

9. *What then*, etc. What are we to conclude respecting the Jews? Are we better than the Gentiles as to the fact of being sinners? Not at all: the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, are sinners and exposed to the penalty of sin. || *For we have before proved*; more correctly, *We have before brought the charge*.

10-18. *As it is written*, etc. The apostle now produces passages from the Old Testament fortifying the charge which he had made; Ps. 14: 1-3. Ps. 5: 9. Ps. 140: 3. Ps. 10: 7. Is. 59: 7, 8. Ps. 36: 1.— || *They are together become unprofitable*; a mild form of saying, They are abominable, fit only to be rejected. || *Their throat is an open sepulchre*. They send forth moral

13 no, not one: their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under 14 their lips: whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness. 15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; destruction and misery 17 *are* in their ways; and the way of peace have they not 18 known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

defilement, as an opened tomb emits noisomeness: — As in the case of the Gentiles, so here, the apostle's language does not require, for its verification, that every Jew should have been guilty of each of these kinds of sin. It is enough, that the Jewish world could be thus described; that some committed one class of sins and others another, while no individual was able to escape from the charge of being a sinner: the more tender any one's conscience and the clearer his understanding of the law of God, the more ready would he be to acknowledge himself a sinner.

19. Having shown the sinfulness of both Jews and Gentiles, the apostle states anew the principle, which he had already exhibited, in 2: 11-16, concerning the condemnation of sinners and the award which will be measured out to them; namely, that these will be regulated by their possession, or their lack, of the written law of God. — *Now we know that what things soever, etc.* It is a settled point with us, that the law is of force to those who are under it, those who have it. Those who have the written law of God will be judged by it; those who have it not will not be judged by it: it does not speak to them. || *That every mouth may be stopped, etc.*; so that every sinner may feel the justice of his doom, and the whole world, Jewish and Gentile, being sinners, may be adjudged

guilty in the sight of God; guilty, severally, according to a just estimate of advantages, and of disadvantages, for knowing the will of God.

20. *Therefore by the deeds of the law, etc.* Since all men, those under the law as well as others, are sinners, it follows that no man can be justified, or treated as righteous, by deeds of the law: all hope, that any human being can be justified by deeds of the law, is cut off; for *by the law is the knowledge of sin*; the law is efficacious only in awakening a sense of sinfulness in those who possess the law. The law of God making known his will leads to the conviction that we are transgressors. Thus the possibility of being justified by the law is absolutely negatived. — As the apostle has Jews particularly in his mind, *the law* is to be taken in its whole extent, both ceremonial and moral, for to a Jew the distinction between the moral law and the ceremonial was of no account. Judaism, or the Mosaic religion, consisted of the entire code of divine prescriptions given through Moses, relative to ritual services as well as to the affections of the heart; and the *outward* was regarded by Jews in general as equally important, at least, with the *inward*, since the whole rested on divine command. *Every* precept of the law was a demand for pious obedience, and *every* compliance with

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even  
 22 the righteousness of God, *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ

the law was held as an act of obedience to a divine command. The performance of a required *ceremony* was, in a Jew's esteem, a pious act, an instance of obedience to God, as well as any personal, or social, virtue. The apostle, then, covers the whole ground; he presents, also, a conclusion, which is as wide spreading as law itself, in reference to the human family.

21-26. The apostle now asserts that while justification cannot result from the law, since the law produces only the consciousness of sin, God has, apart from the law, made known a kind of righteousness which he accepts for men's justification. The essential principle of this righteousness is faith in Jesus Christ: this righteousness is for those who believe in Christ, their faith in him being put to their account as righteousness: this righteousness is for *all* who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, since there is no difference as to the ground of their justification in the sight of God; for both Jews and Gentiles are sinners and can be justified only in a gratuitous way, by the grace, or favor, of God. Christ, in whom the faith which God accepts as righteousness is reposed, has by his expiatory death made manifest the righteousness of God's character, so that he is seen to be righteous while he accepts, and regards as righteous, the believer in Christ.

21. *But now.* These words are here not significant of time, but are merely a formula of transition to the contrast which the apostle is about to present. || *The righteousness of God;* a righteousness which *God has appointed and will accept* for man's justification. It is called the righteousness of God, also, as being distinguished from a *man's own righteousness*, that is, such as would be his,

had he obeyed the law. It also *proceeds from God*, both because by his appointment, faith is put to the believer's account and because faith and the disposition connected with it result from a divine influence on man's heart. || *Without the law;* aside from the law, on a different ground from that which the law can present, the law being set aside as a ground for justification and contributing nothing to that result. || *Being witnessed, etc.;* being testified of in the Old Testament. In 4: 1-8 the apostle produces from that book instances of a righteousness not consisting in actual obedience to the law. Compare the quotation in 1: 17. — When the apostle said in verse 20, By the law is *the knowledge of sin*, he did not express a sentiment in opposition to that which he affirms in this verse, since the word *law* is not there employed in the wide sense of the expression *law and prophets*. He there referred simply to the effect of the law of God on the human conscience and to the certainty that men cannot obtain justification through it. In the present passage, he affirms that even the Old Testament contains proofs of a righteousness which does not consist in obedience to the law, but which, notwithstanding, can be put to a man's account for his justification and secure for him acceptance with God.

22. *By faith of Jesus Christ.* Faith in Christ is the medium through which a person is brought into this state of justification, that faith being put to his account, or reckoned to him, as righteousness; so that, through it, he is as really accepted of God as if he had not been a sinner. || *Unto all and upon all,* etc. There is but little, if any, difference in meaning between these two prepositions, *unto* and *upon*, as here used.

23 unto all, and upon all them that believe ; for there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through

Paul occasionally employs a twofold method of expression with, perhaps, a shade of difference between the words, but chiefly for the sake of more fully and emphatically conveying his idea. Compare 1:17. 3:30. || *For there is no difference* ; no difference between Jew and Gentile, between one man and another, in regard to the righteousness which is revealed for men's justification. All are situated alike in this respect : all are to be treated alike, as occupying common ground : one and the same mode of justification is required for all.

23. *For all have sinned*. No difference exists between Jew and Gentile in regard to the mode of justification, because all alike are sinners : not that all are equally sinful, but all are really sinners, and therefore all must, if justified, or accepted, be justified on a different principle from that of obedience to the law of God. || *And come short of the glory of God* ; are destitute of that glory which cometh from God. However much any may be esteemed, and have glory, among their fellow men, yet they fall short of, are destitute of, that glory which God bestows on beings who have not violated his laws. *The glory* here mentioned is the *praise*, or approval, which God ever gives to those with whose characters he is pleased : and the word, here used, in the original, is the same as in John 5:44. How can ye believe who receive *honor*, glory, one of another, and not the *honor*, glory, which cometh from God only ; and in John 12:43, For they loved the *praise*, glory, of men more than the praise of God.

24. *Being justified freely* ; not on the ground of their deserving, but

gratuitously ; receiving justification as a gift, not as a recompense for obedience to the law of God. || *By his grace* ; by the tender mercy of God, not through their own desert : they cannot claim justification on their own account ; it is gratuitously bestowed on them as a matter of favor, or kindness. || *Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*. Christ has procured redemption, deliverance, from the condemnation due to them as sinners, having given himself as a ransom, 1 Tim. 2:6. By virtue of his death, as a consideration meeting all the demands of the case, those who believe in him are redeemed, rescued, from condemnation and the penalty of sin. Compare Matt. 20:28. Is. 53:10.

25. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation* ; whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory offering, an expiatory victim, by virtue of whose death he might treat men propitiously, and bestow on them pardoning mercy, without impairing the claims of his righteous law. It is in this view of Christ, as an expiatory offering designed to effect reconciliation between God and men, that he is called the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. John 1:29. Compare also 1 John 2:2. Eph. 5:2. Heb. 9:15, 26. 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. || *Through faith in his blood* ; through faith in his death ; that is, through faith in him as having shed his blood, or undergone a violent death. The faith which secures justification is here represented as referring specially to the death of Christ, or to him as having suffered death in our behalf, his death being necessary to the propitiation. — Some editions of the orig-

26 the forbearance of God : to declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness ; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

inal give a different punctuation and connect the words *in his blood* with the word *propitiation* ; thus, *a propitiation in*, that is, *by, his blood*. No material difference in the thought, however, is produced by this alteration : for in either mode of reading the passage, the death of Christ is represented as necessary and available for propitiation, and faith in Christ is represented as the medium for receiving the benefits of his propitiatory death. || *To declare his righteousness* ; literally, *for showing forth his own righteousness*, or, *for making it manifest*. — The word *declare* is here used, as in 1: 4, in the old sense of *making clear*, or *evident* ; as it is used in Matt. 13: 36 and 15: 15. || *For the remission of sins that are past* ; literally, *on account of the remission*, that is, the passing by, without merited punishment, of sins committed in former ages, namely, before the coming of Christ. — The word here translated *remission* is not the word which signifies *forgiveness* in the full sense ; it properly means *passing by without deserved retribution*, *declining to punish*. The idea, here conveyed by the apostle, is similar to that in Acts 17: 30, where God is said to have *winked at* sins committed in the times of comparative ignorance, and in Acts 14: 16, where he is said to have *suffered* all nations to walk in their own ways, without giving full expression to his displeasure at their sins. The sins of former ages were passed by without merited punishment through the divine *forbearance*, not through indifference on the part of God. Since, however, God had shown such forbearance in declining to punish the sins of men, his forbearance might be misunderstood, and the opinion be cherished that he was regardless of men's acts and would not be found strictly just in

his moral administration. But the death of Christ, as a means of propitiation, would effectually correct this error : it would fully display the justice of God and set all his former forbearance in its true light. — In order to present the apostle's thought, the passage may be read in the following manner :— *For showing forth his own righteousness on account of the passing by, through the forbearance of God, of sins formerly committed*. The apostle's remark is applicable to modern times ; for the righteousness of God might be called in question by reason of his forbearing to inflict merited punishment in his providential dealings ; but his righteousness is fully vindicated by the death of Christ for man's redemption.

26. *To declare, I say, at this time*, etc. ; a repetition of the thought that the death of Christ manifested the righteousness of God, with the additional thought that this is done now, at the present time, that is, since Christ has come and submitted to death, in contrast with the former ages alluded to in the preceding verse. A complete manifestation of the righteous character of God, as the supreme Ruler, was reserved for the Messiah's advent and death. || *That he might be just*, etc. The ultimate purpose of the death of Christ is now stated, at least so far as men's justification is concerned ; namely, that God might be seen to be perfectly righteous while even justifying men, that is, accepting them as if righteous, though sinners, on their becoming believers in Jesus.

The death of Christ should be regarded not so much in the light of an external extent, as in the ideas it represents, or the views which it furnishes of the character and government of God. We are not to suppose that God takes pleasure in suf-

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law?  
 28 Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of

ferring, or in the shedding of blood: this would be abhorrent to the spirituality of his nature and to his tenderness; but the efficacy of Christ's death consists, *so far as the apostle shows in this paragraph*, in its so manifesting the righteous character of God that, though he pardon and accept the sinner who believes in Jesus, he cannot justly be suspected of any dereliction of righteousness. But how did his death thus show forth the righteousness of God? In reply: His death was vicarious; he died *the just for the unjust*, 1 Pet. 3: 18; that is, the righteous one *in behalf of* the unrighteous; he bore their sins in his own body on the cross, 1 Pet. 2: 24, *in their stead*, the Lord having laid on him the iniquity of us all, Is. 53: 6; and thus, in his unmeasurable, inconceivable sufferings endured in consequence of his taking on himself our sins, we have a demonstration of God's righteous hatred of sin and of the ill desert of sinners; namely, their deserving to be abandoned of God to an unutterable depth of misery. In view then, of this dreadful and significant death, undergone for us, God can righteously avert from us our merited doom if we come to possess a temper of mind suitable to our case, that is, a penitent temper, and with all our heart accede to the view which God takes of us and of himself, confiding, with entire self-renunciation, in Christ, and becoming his followers, united in spirit with him.—The faith in Christ to which so much importance is attached may be either *the specific conscious act* of trusting in Christ from a deep sense of our personal sinfulness and need of pardon, or *the state of moral feeling* which is involved in discipleship to Jesus: for, the specific act will be followed by entire discipleship, and discipleship, viewed as a moral state, involves the personal trusting in Christ as the

Redemer. Faith, viewed as a specific act, is also the germ of entire Christian character and obedience.

27-30. In these verses the apostle infers that the boasting, in which the Jews indulged, of their superiority to the Gentiles, in consequence of their possessing the Mosaic law, must now be regarded as baseless. Since, also, it was the design of God to abolish the distinction between Jew and Gentile, in regard to privileges, the fact, that justification by faith for both Jews and Gentiles does effectually remove the Jewish ground of self-estimation, may furnish in its turn confirmation to the doctrine that justification stands connected with faith, not with works of the law. This doctrine is, moreover, in harmony with the fact that there is but one God, who is the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews.

27. *Where is boasting, then?* Literally, the *boasting*, the well-known glorying of the Jews over the Gentiles as being so highly distinguished by God in the privilege of being his people and having his law.—Throughout his discussion, the apostle keeps the Jews before his mind: the reasoning is conducted with special reference to them. || *By what law?* By what rule, or governing principle? || *Of works?* By the principle that works of obedience to the law will avail for men's justification? The Jews held to this principle, and hence boasted in their outward distinction from the Gentiles, as having the law, or the religious institution by Moses. || *But by the law of faith,* by the rule, or governing principle, that faith in Christ avails for justification. This leaves no room for personal glorying, since it places justification on the ground of a free gift, not of a deserved payment, or of a reward.

28. *Therefore we conclude*, etc. Since justification by faith in Christ

- 29 the law. *Is he the God of the Jews only?* *is he not also*
- 30 *of the GENTILES?* Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing *it is* one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.
- 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

excludes self-glorying, and thus effects the purpose of God to place all men on a common level, we deem that a man is justified by faith aside from the deeds of the law; the observances of the law contribute nothing to our justification.

29. *Is he the God of the Jews only?* That faith in Christ, and not the observance of the Mosaic law, is required for justification, and consequently that no difference exists between Jews and Gentiles in this respect, is also in harmony with the truth that there is but one God, and he must be acknowledged the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; having a regard for the one as well as for the other. But if justification come from the Mosaic law, then God would be exclusively the God of the Jews, to the detriment of the Gentiles who had not received that law: being, however, the God of all men in common, he has established that principle of justification which is equally applicable to all and available for all. He justifies *the circumcision*, the Jews, by faith, and *the uncircumcision*, the Gentiles, by faith. — No essential difference in meaning is intended by using the different prepositions *by* and *through*. It is an instance of the apostle's practice, which has already been noticed, on verse 22; compare too, in the original, verses 25 and 26. If the prepositions, in this verse, were rendered in a strictly literal manner, the representation would be that justification comes to believing Jews *from* faith, as its source; and to believing Gentiles *by*, or *through*, faith, as its medium. The apostle's mind fastened on *faith* as the principal word.

In the paragraph just considered,

vs. 27-30, the apostle proceeded on what he held as an indisputable truth, which he inculcated, also, on all proper occasions, that the distinction between Jews and Gentiles was no longer to be regarded: the gospel placed them both on a common level. Compare Eph. 2: 11-17. They were, in common, men and sinners; and one common principle was to be applied in their deliverance from a common state of sin and exposure to divine wrath.

31. *Do we then make void the law*, etc. The apostle here replies to a query which would naturally arise, in a Jew's mind, from the doctrine that obedience to the Mosaic law is not the ground of justification, but that justification depends on faith in Christ. This doctrine involves the sentiment that Gentiles, as well as Jews, are graciously regarded by God, and that Jews have no just ground for boasting of superiority to Gentiles. It might seem to a Jew, that this denial to him of any ground of boasting was a depreciation and a virtual renunciation of the law of Moses, that is, of the religious system of Moses. Hence the query, Do we, then, by this doctrine of faith invalidate the law? With the utmost positiveness and with a solemnity which shows how utterly abhorrent was such a thought to all his religious convictions and feelings, he replies, that, so far from making void the law by this principle of justification, he does in fact confirm it. — From Acts 21: 21, 28, it is clear that Paul was believed by large numbers of the converted Jews, as well as of the unconverted, to be unfriendly to the law of Moses. This supposed hostility on his part to the Mosaic religion was employed by his adversaries to defeat

his efforts for promoting the gospel. If the Mosaic religion must be regarded, as it doubtless was by Jews in general, as designed for the justification of men by obedience to the works it enjoined, he would indeed be opposed to it; but this he held to be an erroneous view of it. So far as man's justification is concerned, he held that the law could not accomplish it, but that it must come through Christ. Compare 10: 5. Gal. 2: 16. 3: 10-14. Viewing the religion of Moses in its proper design and relations, he regarded it with reverence and gratitude. Acts 24: 14, 15. He could with the utmost sincerity aver, that he would by no means weaken it, if it were apprehended according to its real design; and that his Christian views went to confirm it, as a revelation of the eternal and immutable principles of piety. But in *what manner* his views confirmed the law, he does not here say. Perhaps he intended, by making a strong asseveration, to show distinctly his conviction, that the doctrine of justification by faith, though it utterly removes the Jews' ground of boasting, is not at variance with the religion of Moses, and thus to disabuse his Jewish readers' minds of the hurtful prejudice which had been indulged, leaving his solemn averment to the considerate regard of his readers.

Opinions as to the manner in which the apostle's doctrine confirms the law are various. Three only need be mentioned: 1. It confirms the law viewed particularly in its moral aspects, since it acknowledges the law as awakening a sense of sin; it is thus built on the law as an immutable basis of moral right. If we were not under condemnation by the law, a gratuitous justification would not be needed: hence, this doctrine involves the binding and inevitable authority of the law.—The distinction, here implied, between the *moral* and the *ritual* in the Mosaic law, was not made by Jews generally, (see on verse 20); since they regarded the

entire law, in all its parts, as resting equally on one and the same basis of divine command, and considered all acts of compliance with it as religious obedience, entitling to recompense. They did not discriminate between the *law* as enjoined on their nation through Moses, and the *eternal and unchangeable law* designed for all moral created beings, which formed the basis of their peculiar national code. An enlightened Jew, however, could not but feel that in spirit, at least, he had not kept the whole law; and therefore, however broadly he might use the word *law*, the law would convict him of sin and make him feel his need of a different basis for acceptance with God. The disclosure of an adequate basis would confirm the law, since the necessity of it was occasioned by the inviolable force of the law.—2. This doctrine confirms the law, because it is only by the efficacy of the provision which this doctrine presents, that the real intent of the law, as requiring a moral disposition conformed to the will of God, can be fulfilled among men. See 8: 4. This doctrine, then, maintains the law as the authoritative expression of what is right in the sight of God, and aims to accomplish the results contemplated by the law.—3. The law, viewed as the religion of Moses presented in the Old Testament, is confirmed by this doctrine, because this doctrine is really contained in that religion. So far, then, from giving up the law as developed in the Jewish scriptures themselves, we derive proofs of this doctrine from those very scriptures, and therefore by no means invalidate the law.—The last of these views is regarded by some writers as being in harmony with the apostle's employing, in the following chapter, as proofs of his doctrine, instances furnished by the Old Testament. This view, however, is not satisfactory.—Perhaps the apostle's remark should be classed among the very comprehensive ones, which are capable of diverse replies, according to

## CHAPTER IV.

The case of Abraham, as suggesting an objection. 1-8. His acceptance with God not resting on obedience to the law of circumcision, but on faith, 9-17. Commendation of Abraham's faith in God, 18-22. The principle on which he was justified, applicable to all, 23-25.

the diverse points of view which a reader takes. Each reply, in such a case, may be worthy of acceptance; though, doubtless, some one should be considered the main reply, and others coincident and subservient.

## CHAPTER IV.

The conclusion to which the apostle had conducted his readers, that acceptance with God is dependent on faith in Christ, and the idea, that this mode of justification effectually removes all ground of boasting, would naturally, since the Jews were very prone to boast, lead a Jew to mention the case of Abraham as opposing a strong objection to the apostle's doctrine. Abraham was a man of singular obedience to the will of God, Gen. 26 : 5 ; yet, according to the apostle's view, he had no claim on God. A Jew, then, would naturally ask, 'According to this view, what did Abraham obtain from his works of obedience ? Did he have even the slightest ground for self-gratulation ?' The question, obviously, involves a negative answer. The apostle takes for granted the negative answer, and proceeds to show its propriety. Granting that Abraham had a ground for self-gratulation if he were justified by works, Paul asserts that he had no such ground *in the sight of God*. That he had no such ground for glorying in the sight of God, the apostle argues from the statement of the scripture that *faith*, not a *legal obedience*, was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. — That a righteousness aside from works is reckoned to the man whom God accepts, appears, in like manner, from the language of David, who describes a person as

blessed that had confessedly been guilty of sin, but is, notwithstanding, accepted of God, his sin not being put to his account. Vs. 1-8.

Now, does this state of blessedness depend on being circumcised ? No: for Abraham was justified in the sight of God *before* he was circumcised, and circumcision was the *seal*, or the confirmation, of the fact that his *faith* was set to his account as righteousness. Thus it was that Abraham became the father of all *believers*, both uncircumcised and circumcised. Vs. 9-12.

As Abraham was to be the father of *all* believers, a promise was virtually made to him that he should possess the entire world, Gentiles and Jews. Now this promise to Abraham was not made through the medium of *the law*, but through the medium of *faith*, or through the medium of that righteousness which was reckoned to faith. If the fulfilment of this promise had been dependent on the law, faith would then have been invalidated, which yet is plainly the ground of the promise, and the promise would inevitably have failed. For if its fulfilment had been made dependent on obedience to the law, the condition would not have been complied with : the law would have been broken and divine wrath, instead of a fulfilment of the promise, would have ensued. In order, therefore, that the promise might be surely fulfilled, it must rest on the ground of a gratuity : hence, faith is the appointed medium. Vs. 13-17.

As Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, so will our faith be put to our account as righteousness, and secure to us justification in the sight of God. Vs. 18-25.

1 WHAT shall we then say that Abraham our father, as per-  
 2 taining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were  
 3 justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory, but not before  
 4 God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed  
 5 God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now  
 to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace,  
 but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on

1. *What shall we say, then, that Abraham, etc.* The arrangement of the words in the original does not connect the clause, *as pertaining to the flesh*, with *Abraham our father*, but with *hath found*. The following expresses the view of the original: *What shall we say, then, that Abraham our father found as pertaining to the flesh?* — *According to the flesh* would seem, from the immediate connection, to have signified the performance of works, perhaps as distinguished in the apostle's mind from the *inward spirit of faith*. Among such works of obedience, circumcision was included. — The question here proposed by the apostle, as a thought that would naturally occur to a Jew, involves a negative reply; as if a person should inquire, with surprise, ‘What then, according to this view of justification, are we to think that even Abraham received as the reward of his deeds? What one thing does it allow him to have obtained?’ The apostle may be conceived of as tacitly assenting to the negative here involved, namely, that Abraham did indeed obtain no blessing, as a deserved recompence of deeds.

2. He now proceeds to sustain this negative reply.—*For.* This word connects the implied negative with the argument on which the apostle grounds it: as if he had said, Abraham obtained nothing in respect to justification, in consequence of his works; *for*, if he had, he would have possessed some ground for glorying; but, in the sight of God, he had no such ground. Whatever merits in the sight of men, and when compared

with men, he may have, before God he has no ground for glorying.

3. The reason for denying to Abraham any title for glorying before God, is now presented: namely, the scripture rests his justification on his faith, not on his works; and faith, as the medium of justification, implies, on the part of the justified person, a *gratuitous* reception of blessings.—*What saith the scripture?* See Gen. 15: 6. || *Abraham believed God;* reposing faith in God, who had made him such a promise as could not be fully admitted by him without a genuine, unwavering confidence in God. || *And it was counted unto him for righteousness;* it was put to his account as righteousness, so that he was thereby justified, or treated as righteous.

4. The apostle now shows how entirely adverse is this scripture-language, concerning Abraham, to the opinion that he was justified by works. To have *faith* put to a person's account as righteousness is applicable, he says, only to the case of one who is not regarded as righteous by virtue of his own works.—*To him that worketh, etc.*; to one who by his own works is accounted righteous, the recompence is not reckoned of grace, that is, as a *gratuity*, a favor, bestowed through kindness, but as a *debt*, as something due to him on the ground of justice.

5. *To him that worketh not, etc.*; to one who is not by virtue of his own works accounted righteous, but who is characterized as *reposing trust* in him that justifieth the *ungodly*, that is, justifieth a man that has been a sinner and is therefore without claim, to such a person his *faith* is reckoned,

him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *saying*, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiveth, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*,

or counted, as righteousness. Now Abraham is characterized as having thus reposed faith in God, and having been, in consequence, justified. Righteousness was, therefore, not reckoned, or counted, to him as a result of works, and consequently he had not a ground of glorying in the sight of God.—The apostle's idea in the 4th and 5th verses may also be thus expressed: To a person who has performed required works, and thus satisfied the conditions of the law, the recompense is not a matter of favor, or a gratuity (and therefore, not dependent on faith; see verse 16), but a matter of debt. It is to a person who has not performed the works of the law, but who trusts to Him who can treat as righteous one that is confessedly a sinner, it is only to such a person that his *faith* is reckoned as righteousness. The reckoning of *faith* as righteousness is inconsistent with the reckoning of *works* as righteousness. Abraham, therefore, since faith was put to his account as righteousness, had a righteousness aside from works, a righteousness resting on a different ground.

6. Even as David also describeth, etc. In harmony with this representation concerning Abraham, is David's language concerning the blessed state of the man to whom God reckons righteousness *without works*, that is, aside from works, or on a different ground from that of works; to whose account God puts righteousness, and whom he accepts as if righteous, though he has not a righteousness founded on his own works.—The word *imputeth*, in this verse, represents precisely the same word in the orig-

inal, as is, in the preceding verses, translated *count* and *reckon*. These three words are, in our version, used in the same sense.

7, 8. *Blessed*, etc. See Ps. 32: 1, 2. The force of this quotation consists in the fact, that a blessed, or happy, state in respect to God is here represented as enjoyed by a man who yet had been confessedly sinful, and who could not, therefore, have been accepted on the ground of personal righteousness, but on the ground of mere favor, God not charging his sins to his account. His blessed state was to him not a matter of *debt*, which he could claim, but of *grace*, coming to him as a gratuity, a free gift. God might have justly imputed sin to him; that is, might have put his sin to his account, but he graciously forebore to do so.

9-17. The apostle now more particularly shows that this blessed state does not rest on the ground of *the law*, but on that of *grace*; that it proceeds not from a legal obedience on the part of the person who is thus blessed, but from grace on the part of God. He maintains that it did not, in the case of Abraham, depend on circumcision, nor on the law at all.

9. *Cometh, then? etc.* Is this state of blessedness affirmed of the circumcised only, as the Jews maintained, or of the uncircumcised also? The very form of this question shows how the subject stood in the apostle's mind, and indicates the proper reply; namely, it is affirmed of the uncircumcised also. To establish this implied affirmative answer to the second part of the question, the apostle remarks, *For we say that faith was reckoned to*

or upon the uncircumcision also ? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned ? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision ? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised ; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, (that righteousness might be imputed unto them also,) and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps

*ABRAHAM as righteousness.* An unreflecting Jew might hastily infer that *Abraham's* justification was, of course, connected with circumcision ; but this very instance of Abraham makes the contrary evident, as the apostle proceeds to show.

10. *How was it then reckoned ?* In what circumstances was Abraham, when his faith was put to his account as righteousness ? Was he circumcised, or uncircumcised ? He was, at that time, uncircumcised ; and, therefore, circumcision bore no part in his justification before God.

11. *And he received the sign, etc.* In addition to the historical fact that Abraham was held righteous in the sight of God, or was justified, previously to his circumcision, the very design of circumcision, in respect to Abraham, shows that his justification was not dependent on it. It was after he was justified through his faith, that he received the sign, or mark of circumcision as a seal, that is, in confirmation, of the fact that God accepted as righteousness the faith which he had reposed in God, while he was yet uncircumcised. || *That he might be the father, etc.* ; so that he might be the father, in a spiritual sense, of all uncircumcised believers, to whom, as well as to himself, on account of their being believers, or on account of their having faith, righteousness is reckoned ; in other words, to whom their faith is reckoned as righteousness, and who are thereby justified.

12. *And the father of circumcision ;*

that is, the father of the circumcised, the Jews : yet not of *all* who are circumcised, but of those only among them who, like him, have faith. This discrimination is immediately expressed. || *To them who are not of the circumcision only,* etc. ; rather, *for, in respect to, those, who should be not merely circumcised, but who should, also, partake of Abraham's faith, the faith which he reposed in the divine declaration while he was yet uncircumcised.* — Abraham became a spiritual father of believing Gentiles and of believing Jews. The paternal relation of Abraham to his lineal posterity, or to those who merely by circumcision avowed their connection with him, was, to the apostle, of no account in respect to justification. He does not here allow to such this kindredship with Abraham : only personal faith constituted one a descendant, or child, with Abraham. So our Lord, in John 8 : 39, etc. Compare also Gal. 6 : 15. Luke 3 : 8, 9.

From Gen. 17 : 1-14 it appears, that God enjoined circumcision on Abraham at a time subsequent to the occasion on which his faith, Gen. 15 : 6, was so signally accepted. This ordinance, however, appointed at a later date as the seal of God's covenant with Abraham, had direct reference to his former belief, or faith, in God's declarations ; so that without this faith, that covenant would not have been made. The apostle seems to have conjoined this covenant and the faith of Abraham, and to have regarded the confirmatory design of

of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being yet  
13 uncircumcised. For the promise that he should be the heir  
of the world *was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through*

circumcision as relating not only to the promise itself of a numerous posterity, but also to Abraham's faith in God. This was the more natural, since the promise, belief in which was so acceptable to God, had reference to Abraham's immediate and remote posterity, and the covenant of circumcision had reference, in like manner, to his succeeding and remote posterity. The promises on the two occasions were the same, so far as numerosness of posterity was concerned; and the confirmation, or seal, of the latter did really involve the confirmation of the former, and was, therefore, a confirmation of God's having accepted, as righteousness, the faith which Abraham reposed in his promise.

13-17. As still further showing that faith is the medium of acceptance with God, the apostle maintains that the promise to Abraham and his spiritual posterity concerning their possession of the world, was dependent on faith, and could have been accomplished through no other medium than a gratuitous one, such as faith is.

13. *For.* The apostle proceeds to state a reason for the preceding view, that Abraham was, by his *faith*, to be the father of believers in all nations, Gentiles and Jews. The reason is, that the distinguished promise to Abraham was not made through the medium of the law, but through the medium of *faith reckoned as righteousness*. || *The promise that he should be the heir of the world.* The original word translated *heir* is not used with so strict a meaning in the scriptures as the word *heir* is with us; it does not necessarily involve the idea of obtaining possession by descent, or by bequest from a former owner; but signifies, likewise, *possessor* in the generic sense, one who has *acquired*, or *obtained*, something. It is so used

in this passage; and the clause might be rendered, *that he should be the possessor of the world*. *The world* here means *the earth and its inhabitants*. Abraham was to possess these. How? By there being multitudes throughout the earth, in every nation, who should look up to him, as their common spiritual father. From him was to descend the Messiah, whose blissful reign would extend over the whole earth. In Gen. 15: 18-21. 17: 8, the possession of the land of Canaan and of extensive neighboring countries was promised to Abraham; in Gen. 15: 5, 22: 17, (compare also 17: 4-6), it was promised that his posterity should be innumerable; in Gen. 12: 3. 18: 18. 22: 18, that all nations should be blessed through him. The premises, viewed conjointly, involved the idea, that the whole world was in reality embraced in them. The world was to belong to Abraham and his posterity in a sense substantially the same as we intend when we say, the world is to be overspread with Christians and they are to possess it. Thus the whole world was to be Abraham's, the sphere throughout which he would be acknowledged as a father, and throughout which the Messiah, the distinguished One of his posterity, would diffuse blessings.—This promise, according to the view which the apostle here takes of it, had reference to the spiritual posterity of Abraham, as well as to Abraham himself; and in reference to both, it may have had a twofold signification: first, Abraham was to possess the world, since by the world's coming under the sway of the religion of which he was to be so eminent an instrument, he would have a sort of spiritual possession, or dominion, in all nations: his posterity, too, would possess the world, inasmuch as his spiritual chil-

14 law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the 15 promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh 16 wrath: for where no law is *there is* no transgression. Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed: not to that only which

dren, the followers of Christ, would blessing, is done away with, as being overspread the world, and the principles of their religion supplant those of every other. Secondly: The possession of the world is indicative of dignity and bliss; and the eminence and happiness, thus represented, embraced all the spiritual and immortal blessings which God would bestow on his favored ones. This view of the promise is applicable both to Abraham and to his spiritual posterity; and thus viewed, the promise is of the same nature as that which frequently occurs concerning the righteous; namely, they shall inherit the earth; in other words, they shall possess the truly good things of earth, true happiness, a blessed state. || *Not through the law*; the law, or legal obedience, was not the medium through which this promise came, and the fulfilment of this promise was not, therefore, made to depend on legal obedience. || *But through the righteousness of faith*; faith, accepted as righteousness, was the medium through which this promise came.

14. That the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham and his spiritual posterity is dependent on *faith*, arises not merely from a view of historical dates in reference to Abraham, and from the design of circumcision, but also from the very nature of the law, or of a system of legal requirements. This the apostle next presents, as sustaining the affirmation in the 13th verse.—*For*, etc.: for, if *they* are to inherit the promise *who are of the law*, who possess the law, and seek the promised blessings *from the law* as the recompense of their obedience, then *faith is made void*, has no efficacy as to securing the fulfilment of the promise; faith as a condition of the

inconsistent with a *legal* obedience and a consequent claim. *Faith*, as the medium, is wholly opposite to *legal* obedience, as the medium; and consequently, if *legal* obedience be made the medium, *faith* is annulled: and then, what will be the inevitable result as to the promise? || *The promise made of none effect*; the promise is, then, virtually annulled, it has become fruitless; it must fail entirely of accomplishment.

15. *Because the law worketh wrath*. The promise, were its fulfilment conditioned on legal obedience, would inevitably fail; because the law, as acting on human beings, brings to them, not the fulfilment of the promise, but the wrath of God; since they will break the law, and transgression of it demands the penalty. Such is the moral state of men, that, if we seek for freedom from transgression, we must search for it where the law is not. The law must, therefore, be a medium of divine wrath; and the promise, if resting on that ground, must fail; for the law enjoins duty alone, it provides not deliverance from the penalty for disobedience.—The inevitable result, that human beings will transgress under law, is elsewhere shown by the apostle. In 3: 20 the law is said to occasion *a consciousness of transgression*; in 5: 13, 20, to increase accountability and occasions of sin; and in 7: 7, etc., to awaken and even stimulate men's sinful propensities, rather than to free from them.

16. *Therefore it is of faith*, etc. Hence the inheritance, or the possession of the promised blessings, is made dependent on *faith*, in order that it might be *according to grace*.

is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were: who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; (according to that which was spoken; So

Since the promised blessings could not be secured through a *legal medium*, God has appointed a *gracious medium*: through faith the blessings are to be received. Faith was appointed as the medium of a gracious bestowal, in order that the promise might prove sure to the entire spiritual posterity of Abraham; not only to that part which possessed the law, namely, the Jews, but also to that which, not having the law, yet had faith such as Abraham's, who, by his faith, is the spiritual father of us all who have faith, Jews and Gentiles, trusting, as he also did, to the declarations of God.

17. *As it is written*, etc. This idea of Abraham's being the father of all believers agrees with God's declaration to him, in Gen. 17: 5, concerning his becoming a father of many nations; the numerosness of his natural posterity being a foretokening of the innumerable multitude, out of all nations, that should follow him in *faith*. || *Before him*, etc. These words are to be connected with the preceding verse: Abraham is father of all believers, *before God*, that is, in the view of God in whom he trusted. God thus regards him. || *Who quickeneth the dead*; who maketh alive the dead: a recognition of the almighty power of God. Allusion is, probably, made to the thought in the 19th verse, which would naturally have forbidden the expectation of a posterity from Abraham: but this thought connects itself with the more general one of God's having power even to make the dead alive, and of Abraham's trusting to God as an almighty Being. || *And calleth*,

etc.; calleth forth, and disposeth of, things which are not yet in being, as though they were; through his almighty creative power, he gives order concerning things not yet in existence, just as if they were in existence, for his purposes concerning them will stand. It is immaterial to him, whether they are now in existence, or are to be; he foresees every thing, and has power to accomplish whatever he pleases. The future lies before him as really as the present. Nothing is beyond his power. He is able to make promises concerning a remote future, just as easily as concerning time near at hand. Abraham trusted in him as being thus powerful and faithful, and unhesitatingly believed the divine promise.

18-22. The remarkable strength of Abraham's faith is now shown by the apostle. The patriarch trusted in the declarations of God, as the Almighty and as, therefore, able to accomplish whatever He should please, though in circumstances, to human view, the most forbidding.

18. *Who against hope*, etc.; who though all natural circumstances were adverse to hope, yet in hope believed the promise of God, that he should become a *father of many nations*, of an innumerable posterity. || *According to that which was spoken*, etc.; in accordance with God's declaration to him, when bidding him look toward heaven and number the stars, he said, So shall thy seed be. Gen. 15: 5. A similar declaration is recorded in Gen. 13: 16. 22: 17. Compare also Heb. 11: 12.

19. *He considered not*, etc.; he paid no regard to the circumstance

19 shall thy seed be,) and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred 20 years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb : he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ; but 21 was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to 22 perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23 Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him : but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed,

of his advanced age. Though the thought of this entered Abraham's mind, Gen. 17 : 17, yet he allowed it no influence in opposition to God's promise.

20. *He staggered not, etc.*; wavered not, did not indulge in doubts, but was strong in his confidence that God's promise would be fulfilled. || *Giving glory to God* ; honoring God, as One that could not but prove faithful to his word. — A full belief of God's promises admits his real character and gives him the honor which is his due.

22. *And therefore it was imputed, etc.* His faith in God, that is, his believing, so readily and fully, the declaration of God, was put to his account as righteousness. His faith was peculiarly strong ; it paid special honor to God, as the Being who would not fail to accomplish his word, however unlikely its fulfilment might seem. By thus fully believing in him, though all circumstances were unfavorable to the fulfilment of the promise, Abraham acknowledged and honored the true nature and character of God ; and because he thus simply and heartily relied on God, when, to all human appearance, he had no rational ground for hope, his faith was regarded as righteousness, and by virtue of it he had favor with God. — The apostle had in mind the remarkable strength of Abraham's faith, as well as its genuineness ; and as this strong faith, resting simply and without wavering on the veracity of God while, according to the course

of nature, the promised event was hopeless, paid honor to God as the almighty fulfiller of his word, it was peculiarly acceptable to him and was put to Abraham's account as righteousness, without any external works of legal obedience.

23-25. The case of Abraham is now applied to that of believers in Jesus.

23. *Now it was not written, etc.* The fact, that Abraham's faith was put to his account as righteousness, was not recorded, Gen. 15 : 6, for his own sake merely ; not merely that an honorable and enduring testimony might be borne to him.

24. *But for us also* ; it was recorded for our sake also, in order to show us the principle on which we too may be justified. Though the object of Abraham's faith, in the instance produced by the apostle, was not the same as that of the Christian's faith, yet the nature of faith, and its moral quality, in the two cases are the same. It is a confiding in God, in his declarations and his arrangements, and is indicative of right feelings and purposes towards him : as directed to Christ, it is a trusting in him as our Redeemer and Lord, and a virtual uniting of ourselves to him for a personal participation in the spiritual and eternal blessings which can come to us only through him. || *To whom it shall be imputed* ; to whom faith, similar to Abraham's, shall be reckoned as righteousness for our justification. || *If we believe on him, etc.* Abraham had faith in God respecting

*if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

a case which was like making alive the dead ; so we are to have faith in God as having raised up Jesus from the dead. It is in God, as having raised up Jesus, that we are here said to believe, because the resurrection of Jesus was the great fact which proved him to be the Son of God, 1 : 4. Luke 18 : 33. Acts 2 : 29—32, and confirmed the acceptableness to God of his life and death, John 10 : 17 ; his resurrection was necessary, also, to the consummation of his mediatorial work in heaven.—To *believe in God*, thus viewed, is the same as to *believe in Christ*; the one involves the other. The mode of speaking, here adopted, originated from the apostle's mention of Abraham's *believing in God*, and from his desire to preserve similarity in the cases of Abraham and of believers in Christ. Compare, for this mode of expression, 1 Pet. 1 : 21.

25. *Who was delivered*; delivered up to death. || *For our offences*; on account of our transgressions; as a sin-offering, a propitiatory sacrifice. 3 : 25. || *Raised again*; from the dead. || *For our justification*; on account of our justification; so that we might be justified.—The death and resurrection of Christ, and, we might add, his ascension to heaven, are parts of a great transaction, having for its object our justification and salvation. The apostle looks separately at the death and the resurrection of Christ, and at their propitiatory and justifying efficacy, rather for the sake of completeness and vivid impression than for the purpose of making minute doctrinal distinctions. In other passages, the *death* of Christ is represented as the ground of justification through faith in him, 3 : 25. 5 : 6, 8, 10; but then it is a death which was followed by a resurrection: the *resurrection* of Christ is sometimes regarded with prominence, as con-

nected with our enjoyment of the divine favor, 1 Pet. 3 : 21; but then it is the resurrection, as preceded by a peculiar death.—We are here viewed in a twofold state; first, as sinners under condemnation, and next, as justified. The former view connects itself with the sorrowful scene of the Saviour's death on account of our sins; the latter connects itself rather with the Saviour's triumph over death, as having completed his propitiatory work and delivered his followers from the just desert of their sins, securing their justification and acceptance with God.—As our justification results from believing in Christ, and we should not have adequate reason for believing in him, had he not risen from the dead agreeably to his prediction, there is a special appropriateness in connecting our justification with his resurrection, the signal event which proved that his death was not that of a common man, but of the Son of God, and that it was accepted of God as the ground of human salvation.

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ADDITIONAL NOTE on the expression, *Faith was counted for righteousness, or imputed, or reckoned for righteousness*.—These three words, as has been already stated under verse 6, represent one and the same word in the original. This expression does not mean that faith is put to a person's account *instead* of righteousness in any such sense as to imply that a justified person may be still an unrighteous man; but that faith is put to his account as *righteousness*, so as to be regarded by God in the light of a righteousness: that is, faith towards God, or Christ, in other words, the believing temper of mind which confides in God's declarations, is graciously accepted by him as righteousness, through which its possessor, though sin might justly be put to his

## CHAPTER V.

Consequences of justification by faith, 1-11. Parallel and contrast between Adam and Christ, 12-19. Purpose for which the Mosaic law was introduced, 20, 21.

- 1 THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with
- 2 God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in
- 3 hope of the glory of God. And not only *so*, but we glory in

account, is justified in the sight of God. This believing, or confiding, temper is also an obedient temper ; but the obedience has its root in faith towards God, not in an originally righteous spirit. The reckoning of righteousness to a believer, then, is not a mere show. The difference, however, is easily perceived between a *law-righteousness*, consisting in a personal obedience to the divine law, which obedience would be a ground of justification in the sight of God ; and a *faith-righteousness*, consisting in a cordial trust in God, or Christ, which trust, being a bond of union to Christ, is, by the grace of God, accepted as available to the person's justification, while, if judged on strictly legal grounds, he would be condemned.

## CHAPTER V.

The apostle has now completed his reasoning on the question of justification in the sight of God ; and proceeds to touch on the blissful results of justification to believers, or the happy condition into which they are brought as to their relation to God, as to their hopes and their present joys. He instances, as these results, peace with God, hope of future glory, exultation even in troubles, exultation in reference to God. Vs. 1-11.

Resemblances and contrasts between Adam and Christ are then presented. Vs. 12-19. A reason is next given for the introduction of the Mosaic law. 20, 21.

1. Being justified by faith ; being

treated as righteous, being accepted of God, through faith in Christ. || *Peace with God* ; a peaceful mind towards God, in contrast with the dread formerly felt in view of his justice and deserved wrath.

2. Access—*into this grace* ; admission into this state of favor, or gratuitous blessing, namely, justification in the sight of God and reconciliation with him. || *Wherein we stand* ; in which we stand fast.—The carefulness of the apostle in keeping Christ before the minds of his readers, as the author of this justification, and faith in him, as the medium of its attainment, is very noticeable : both are mentioned in the first verse and both again in the second.—|| *Rejoice* ; exult. The word in the original expresses such feelings as are often conveyed by the term *boast of*, employed in a commendable manner. || *The glory of God* ; the glory of heaven which belongs to God and to which he will admit the disciples of Christ.

3. *Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also* ; not only do we exult in the hope of heavenly glory, but in troubles also. Not dismayed by our troubles, we even make our boast of them. The idea of the sacred writer is not exhausted by the thought that we exult in the midst of troubles, or afflictions : but the troubles themselves he seems to regard as a ground of exultation.—The reasons of this sentiment are next given. || *Tribulation worketh patience* ; trouble conduces to patient endurance, steadfastness. In trials, the believing heart remains constant, does not admit the

tribulations also ; knowing that tribulation worketh patience ;  
 4 and patience, experience ; and experience, hope : and hope  
 5 maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad  
 in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

thought of abandoning the Saviour ; it adheres the more closely to him. Troubles, as being a part of the appointed discipline, promote steadfastness.

4. *Patience worketh experience.* Experience, here, means not the process of subjection to trials, but the result, namely, *approved integrity*, which the patient endurance of troubles works out. Patient endurance of afflictions, or steadfastness in the midst of them, results in tried integrity towards God. || *Experience worketh hope* ; experience of afflictions, issuing in the result of confirmed Christian integrity, produces hope.—The hope, here intended, is an advanced stage of hope as mentioned in the second verse and amounts to strong confidence in the attainment of its objects. It is hope, strengthened and matured by trials.

5. *Hope maketh not ashamed.* The hope thus matured, warranted and encouraged by confirmed Christian integrity, does not disappoint its possessor. It will not fail to be realized, and will not, through failure, make him ashamed of his confident expectations : it will issue in the actual possession of the unutterable glory which it anticipates.—The ground of this persuasion is next presented. || *Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts*, etc. ; because God loves us, and has given abundant expression to his love by the Holy Spirit bestowed on us. By the Holy Spirit he has imparted an assured and felt conviction of his love to us ; and has awakened within us a corresponding affectionate temper towards him, so that we feel that he has loved us. As the confiding child knows, and feels, that his parent loves him, and this filial temper helps him rightly to estimate his parent's acts, as emanating from parental love, so the believer, under

the copious influence of the Holy Spirit has such a temper of mind towards God as makes him feel that God has loved him. God has not kept his love to us pent up, as it were, in his own breast ; he has given copious and full expression to it : he has come to our hearts, and poured it forth abundantly on them, so that we feel he has loved us. An affectionate friend makes known his love by appropriate tokens and acts, and these produce, in the object of his regard, a sense of the love which is thus expressed ; so God makes us sensible of his love to us. This is done by the agency of the Holy Spirit, whose access to our souls produces not so much a conviction as a *feeling*, that God loves us, a sensibility to God's love.—The reciprocal action of mind and heart must here be acknowledged ; but the superior action is that of the heart, cherishing affection towards God through the power of the Holy Spirit.—|| *By the Holy Ghost*, etc. By the agency of the Holy Spirit, God's love to us becomes a matter of conviction and deep feeling. The Spirit renovates our hearts and imparts to us a filial temper, making us genuine disciples of Christ, so that God can consistently with his holy character abundantly express his love to us. This expression of God's love for us, as believers on his Son, is a sufficient assurance that the hope resting on Christ will never fail.—While, by the Holy Spirit, God makes manifestations, in our hearts, of his love and acknowledges us as his children, the gift of the Spirit is itself a fruit of his love. The apostle's idea is substantially the same here as in the passages where the Spirit is spoken of as the *earnest* of the promised inheritance, given before-hand to believers. See 2

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ  
 7 died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will  
 one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even  
 8 dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in  
 9 that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much  
 more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved  
 10 from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we

Cor. 5 : 5, God, who also hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit ; and Eph. 1 : 13, 14, Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, or, the promised Holy Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance. It is the *earnest*, since it makes us holy and fits us for the heavenly inheritance, awakens filial feelings towards God and draws us to an affectionate intercourse with him.

6. The love of God had been mentioned, v. 5, as the ground of confidence that the hope enjoyed by believers would not be disappointed. The apostle now proceeds to the *evidence* of God's love, consisting in what he has done in our behalf.— *When we were yet without strength* ; while we were weak, unable to help ourselves ; while we were in sin and wretchedness, and unable to rescue ourselves from condemnation. This state is, indeed, a guilty one ; but the precise point, which the apostle has in mind, is the helplessness to which sin had reduced us, as to attaining deliverance and the divine favor. || *In due time* ; at the appointed time, according to the divine arrangement of events : as the apostle says in Gal. 4 : 4, *when the fulness of the time was come*. || *Christ died for the ungodly* ; for the benefit, or in behalf, of the ungodly. Those who had just been spoken of as having no spiritual strength to extricate themselves from their wretched state, are here denominated *ungodly* ; as, in the 8th verse, they are in like manner called *sinners*. It is here assumed, as well known and remembered by readers, that Christ is the Son of God : and thus his dying for the ungodly attests God's love to men.

7. That Christ's dying in behalf of men attests the greatness of God's love, is shown by contrast. Scarcely would any one die in behalf of even a *just* man, fallen into calamity : but Christ died for us *sinners*, meriting his displeasure.— *Scarcely for a righteous man* ; a just man, a man of integrity, acknowledged to have committed no offence. || *Yet peradventure for a good man*, etc. The apostle concedes the *possibility*, that one might offer his life in behalf of another ; in behalf of a generous, noble-hearted man, always ready to do a favor, and endearing himself to everybody by his kind and noble deeds, perhaps some one might offer to die. This admission, however, does not diminish the force of the contrast ; for such a case cannot exist in reference to Christ. No acts of generosity could have been done by men towards him, in requital for which he would offer himself to death.

8. So far from having secured regard by the bestowal of benefits, men were not even simply *just*, they were not *without guilt*, in the sight of God. They were positively sinners, justly condemned. *God commendeth his love towards us* ; shows forth, gives proof of, his deep love for us.

9. *Much more then*, etc. A strong inference from the preceding verse : If through the death of his Son, as the proof of his love for us, we are now justified, that is, treated as if righteous, much more shall we, as justified, be saved through his Son from final wrath.

10. *For if, when we were enemies*, etc. The same idea is more strongly presented. If, having been enemies to God, we have, through the death

were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; much more,  
**11** being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not  
only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus  
Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

**12 WHEREFORE** as by one man sin entered into the world,

of his Son, become his friends, much more, now that we are his friends, we shall be completely saved *through his life*, since he now ever liveth in heaven to act as our patron. Compare 8 : 34 ; the idea of which verse is, since Christ has died for us, rather is risen, and is at the right hand of God, pleading our cause, no one can rise up to condemn us. See, also, Heb. 7 : 25, He is able to save to the uttermost, that is, completely, them that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them ; also, 1 John 2 : 1. That Christ should die for us, while we were sinners, is more surprising than that he will complete our salvation by acting in our behalf on high, now that we have become justified and reconciled to God through his death.

**11. Not only so, but we also joy in God.** Not only does the love of God warrant this confidence of future salvation, so that we can exult in the troubles which assail us, but we also exult in God, make our boast of him as bearing to us, through Christ, most endearing relations. || We have received the atonement ; that is, the reconciliation intimated in the preceding verse. The word *atonement* bore this signification, when our translation of the scriptures was made, and the original word is, as to its root, the same as is translated *reconciled* in the 10th verse. The result of our Lord's death, namely, reconciliation, is here meant ; not the means, or process, by which that result was reached. This reconciliation is a matter of present enjoyment ; we have it now. — Well may we exult, since God, the almighty and most merciful, is our friend. For this state of reconciliation with God we are indebted to Christ.

**12-19.** The apostle had been unfolding the method of justification, and had just shown its happy results in those who avail themselves of its benefits by believing in Christ. The idea of reconciliation to God and its consequent bliss, was now particularly prominent in his mind : and the conception of the unhappy state of men, as sinners, and the glorious contrast as to the state of Christ's followers, seems to have suggested to him a parallel between Adam, the head of the human race, through whom sin, condemnation and woe entered into the world, and Christ, the head of believers, through whom come justification, recovery to holiness, and bliss. The advantage is immensely on Christ's side of the parallel, and strikingly confirms the views given in the preceding part of the chapter.

**12. Wherefore.** This word relates to the preceding train of thought which had established the great truth, that justification and eternal life come to us through Jesus Christ. This truth places Christ at the head of the justified and reconciled company, a position, corresponding to that of Adam as the head of the human race. || *By one man* : Adam, as appears from the following verses. || *Sin entered into the world* ; into the world of mankind, the human family : mankind became sinful. || *Death.* This word has various significations, according to the connection in which it occurs. It is, at least mainly, in this paragraph, the contrast of *spiritual and eternal life*, the blessed state of favor with God, all spiritual good for time and eternity. See verses 17 and 21 ; compare Deut. 30 : 15. Spiritual life consists in the conformity of our hearts to the divine

and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that  
13 all have sinned : (For until the law, sin was in the world ;

will, and in our harmony with God as to affections, purposes and conduct : its possession secures to us the exalted bliss, in time and eternity, which cannot but flow from our standing in right relations towards God. Death is the opposite of this ; it is that miserable condition in which a moral and accountable being stands, whose heart is not right with God, who has no delight in his will and no well-grounded peace of mind, who is filled with dread in respect to God, and who, when awoken to his spiritual state, can anticipate only condemnation. The death of the body does not furnish an adequate contrast to the life which is connected with being justified in the sight of God ; yet bodily death, as eminently a form of human misery, is included in the apostle's idea ; for, that he regarded the death of the body as a consequence of sin, and of our connection with Adam, is evident from 8: 10 and from 1 Cor. 15: 22. Compare Gen. 3: 19.—Death, as it now occurs to man, would not have been endured but on account of sin ; for though the Creator may never have designed that men should have an uninterrupted existence on this earth, and in their present material bodies, yet the transition to a different sphere of being, and the laying aside of the animal body, might have been effected in a way not suitable to be called *death*, but only a change unaccompanied by pain or any disagreeable circumstances, a desirable and glorious change, like that which will take place on those who, instead of dying, will be changed at the resurrection. 1 Thess. 4: 15-17. 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52. The dissolution of soul and body, *as it now takes place*, must, however, be put to the account of sin ; and bodily death, as being the most dire evil to unholy men, and far from being void of terror even to the righteous, may well be included

among the miserable results of sin. || *Death passed upon all men.* The original is quite expressive, *hath passed through unto all men.* || *For that all have sinned.* The reason is here given, why the wretched state of death, taken comprehensively, has extended to all. The apostle seems careful to prevent an abuse of his statement that, in consequence of one man's sin, all men are become subject to death : all, he says, are subject to the doom of sin, since all have sinned.

13, 14. *For until the law sin was in the world.* The assertion that *all had sinned* and incurred the doom of sin, needed confirmation, particularly among Jews. The apostle had already shown that Jews, as well as Gentiles, were sinners ; and now he finds it necessary to show that men were all sinners, previously to the introduction of the Mosaic law which drew the distinction so broadly between Jews and other nations. Instead, therefore, of presenting at once the contrasted thought concerning Christ, namely, that righteousness and eternal life come by Christ, he interrupts his course in order to sustain that assertion. He affirms that, as a matter of fact, sin was committed previously to the introduction of the law, from the time of Adam down to the time when the law was introduced ; though he concedes that, without so clear an announcement of the divine will as the law made, sin is not charged to men's account, that is, comparatively : notwithstanding, it was a fact, that sin was in the world and that men were subjected to its doom, from Adam to Moses, even before the law was given, and therefore in the absence of a direct and full revelation of the divine will.—He here viewed sin as a violation of that law which is involved in our very being, as subjects of God : men disregarded the inalienable, though un-

14 but sin is not imputed when there is no law ; nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is 15 the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto

written, claims of God as their Creator and Ruler. The Mosaic law was not the beginning of divine legislation ; it was a more direct and systematic declaration of moral principles which lie necessarily in man's nature. || *Sin is not imputed* ; sin is not put to a person's account. Comparatively speaking, the sins of men were not held to be so aggravated as to be put to their account with strictness, while a clear revelation of the divine will was not possessed ; in such circumstances, sin is not charged in all its fulness ; God makes merciful allowances. Compare John 15: 22. Acts 14: 16. 17 : 30.

14. *Death reigned* ; death bore sway, as a domineering tyrant, subjecting men, soul and body, to its power. The misery consequent on sin, is here personified : sin comes, and death, the infector of all misery, follows in its train. || *Them that had not sinned after the similitude*, etc. ; those who had not sinned in circumstances like Adam's : that is, against clearly expressed commands. The idea, in this clause, corresponds to the expression in the preceding verse, *when there is no law*. The assertion of the apostle is, that the sway of death was felt before the giving of the law, during the whole time from Adam to Moses : men were, therefore, sinners ; they were subjected to misery, as being sinners, notwithstanding the merciful allowances, which God makes in reference to those who have not the means of a clear knowledge of his will. All men were in a state of condemnation, and death had sway over them, as sinners, though the law had not yet

been given. || *Adam, who is the figure*, etc. ; who is a counterpart, a resemblance, of Christ, as to the relation in which he stood. The resemblance, or correspondence, between Adam and Christ, consists in the fact, that both of them stood as heads of respective companies ; Adam the sinner, by means of whom sin and death pervaded the human family ; Christ the righteous, by means of whom come righteousness and life. — The sentiment that Adam was a figure, or resemblance of Christ, contained a thought of great importance, as really suggesting the corresponding part of the comparison commenced in the 12th verse, but not there carried out, namely, that righteousness and eternal life come by Christ. This part of the comparison having thus been really suggested, the apostle leaves it for the present and proceeds, in verses 15-17, to indicate contrasts between Adam and Christ, as to the results which have flowed from them respectively. These results are, immeasurably, to the advantage of the grace of Christ.

15. The transgression and the free gift are here contrasted as to their results.—*If through the offence of one many be dead*, etc. ; more literally, If through the offence of the one, that is, Adam, the many, that is, the mass of men, mankind, be dead.—On one side, the many were, through the offence of the one, in a state of death, for that they all sinned : on the other side, the grace, or favor, of God and the free gift of righteousness and life bestowed in consequence of that grace, through the one man Jesus Christ, far more abounded to the many, for that they

16 many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift. For the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ). Therefore, as

believed in Christ. *The many*, in the former case, are all who have sinned, as appears from the 12th verse; *the many*, in the latter case, are all who have believed, as appears from the doctrine established in the preceding chapters of the epistle and from the 17th verse of the present chapter.—Death is to all who sin; the free gift of life is to all who believe in Christ. These conditions on which death and life, respectively, are adjudged, must not be overlooked; since, if overlooked, neither the condemned state of men, nor the justified state of Christ's disciples, would be properly estimated.—The point of contrast, here, is, the great abundance of divine favor by Jesus Christ, so far exceeding the doom incurred through the transgression of Adam. The infliction of misery, on the part of God, is always kept within the limits of justice, so that no one is ever unjustly treated: the bestowal of happiness, however, does not require so strict a regard to measure, since God delights in the *exuberance* of his love to those who are prepared to enjoy it; and he need not repress it, for his goodness can be indulged towards righteous beings without injustice, or harm, to any.—The thought seems, also, involved here, that life is a gift proceeding from divine favor, while death is a just desert of men's sins.

16, 17. The persons, Adam and Christ, are next contrasted; first, as to the judicial sentence and the free gift; secondly, v. 17, as to the results, both in kind and in magnitude.—*For the judgment was by one to condemnation*, etc. The judicial sentence, occasioned by Adam, and the gift, procured by Christ, are here contrasted. The sentence proceeded from one of

the fence to *condemnation*; but the free gift, from *many* offences to *justification*. Adam's *one* transgression was a prolific source of condemnation, as it was followed by the fact that all have sinned, and come under condemnation; but, through Christ, *many* sins are followed by *justification* as a free gift to believers, notwithstanding the many sins.

17. The second point of contrast between the persons, Adam and Christ, is found in the nature and magnitude of the respective results produced by each.—*If by one man's offence, death reigned by one*, etc. If by the offence, or transgression, of the *one*, Adam, death reigned, through that one, over men, lording it over them, inflicting all miseries on them, in body and soul; on the other hand, by *the one*, Jesus Christ, shall men reign, become kings in the future glory, be exalted to a royal state in eternal life, exalted to spiritual glory and bliss; those men, namely, who become partakers of the abundant divine favor and the free gift of righteousness, that is, righteousness by faith, so as to be justified in the sight of God.—The description here given of those who should be blessed with eternal life shows that, throughout this paragraph, the idea of believing in Christ, on the part of those who are justified, is to be understood. Death and life are here contrasted; also, the reign of death over sinners and the glorious reign of those who are justified through the righteousness of faith; so that, instead of being reigned over by death, they themselves shall reign in life, shall be elevated to signal glory and bliss. As to degree, the contrast will eminently honor the grace of God, since

by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift 19 came* upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

the abundance of glory and bliss, enjoyed by those who receive the gift of righteousness, will so entirely outweigh the misery consequent on sin.

18. Having shown contrasts between Adam and Christ, who resemble one another in regard to being at the head of their respective companies, the apostle returns to the comparison which was partially stated in the 12th verse, but was there interrupted. This comparison is, however, rendered more complete and impressive by the connection in which it is here resumed.—*By the offence of one*; more correctly rendered, *by one offence*, the first sin of Adam. This was the commencement of human transgressions, the first in a long series: it issued in the condemnation of all, since all have followed in transgression. See verse 12. || *So by the righteousness of one*; more correctly, *by one righteous act*. Special reference is here had to the crowning act of Christ's righteousness, namely, the laying down of his life. Compare John 10: 17. This view of the passage is in harmony with the prominence given, throughout this epistle, to the death of Christ. || *The free gift*. These words are supplied by the translators, as also the word *judgment*, from the 16th verse. The subject was so completely and vividly before the apostle's mind, and the idea had, already, been so clearly expressed, that he naturally leaves the reader to supply these terms. The result of the transgression, on the one hand, is contemplated, and of the righteousness, or righteous deed, on the other, in respect to the contrasted companies. || *Came upon all men*. As the extent of the *judgment* is regulated by the fact that *all have sinned*, so the extent of the *free gift*

is regulated by the fact that all who receive it *have believed* in Christ: the word *all* is applicable in each case, since the *entire company*, in each case, is contemplated by the apostle. || *Unto justification of life*; justification which secured eternal life. This was the ultimate result in regard to the entire company of believers in Christ.

19. The reason is now given for the ultimate result in the two cases respectively, mentioned in the preceding verse; *condemnation*, leading to death, *justification*, leading to life. This reason is, that in the one case *the many* had become sinners, in the other, *the many* had become righteous. *By one man's disobedience, etc.*; through the disobedience (v. 8, the offence), specially the first act of disobedience, of the one man, Adam, *the many* (such is a literal expression of the original), that is, *the multitude* of whom he was the head, became sinners. || *So by the obedience of one shall many*, etc. The *obedience* here mentioned is, in accordance with the *righteousness*, or righteous act, mentioned in verse 18, the special and crowning act of obedience on the part of Christ; namely, his giving himself up to death, thus forming a correspondence and contrast to the first act of disobedience on the part of Adam. Compare Phil. 2: 8, where death is mentioned as the extent to which the obedience of Christ was carried.—Through the *obedience of the one*, namely Christ, particularly in submitting to the death of the cross, shall *the many*, the multitude of whom he is the Head, become righteous. || *Were made sinners*. According to the original verb here used, the clause may be properly rendered, *were constituted, came into the standing, or condition, of sinners*; that is, became sin-

ners. || *Shall be made righteous; shall be constituted, come into the standing, or condition, of righteous ones; that is, shall become righteous* in the sight of God, through faith in Christ.—The precise *nature* of men's moral connection with Adam, or the way in which all become sinners through his transgression, the apostle does not explain: he asserts the fact, and that, for the purpose of illustrating the mercy of God in the redemption of believers in Christ. The question belongs to the domain of speculative religious philosophy and will always be variously answered. Whatever account is to be given of human sinfulness, as to its origination, two things are certain: first, *As soon* as human beings reflect on their moral state, they find themselves sinners and under condemnation: second, Every enlightened mind passes condemnation on itself, as personally guilty for every one of its sinful affections, purposes and acts. The genuine religious philosopher cannot be contented with a theory which overlooks either of these facts.

Is the justification spoken of by the apostle *actual*, or only *possible*, justification? justification itself, or a provision for it? In reply, it must be considered, that the language will not admit of any other meaning than that of actual justification. The terms are such as occur in other places where the meaning is not liable to such a question. Again; the condemnation which is the opposite of it is a real condemnation: so too then, is the justification.

The difficulty which prompts this inquiry can be more satisfactorily obviated than by resorting to the supposition, that merely a provision for justification is here spoken of. The difficulty is, that justification seems here made co-extensive with condemnation, and consequently seems to include all men. Now we must not forget, that through all the preceding part of the epistle the writer has been

exhibiting the medium of justification, namely, faith in Jesus Christ: without this, he teaches, the hope of justification is not to be cherished. This is clearly his doctrine, and it must be regarded as running through this paragraph, though not here formally mentioned. Compare the 17th verse. Let this paragraph be explained in conformity with the apostle's principles, so largely manifested and so elaborately and carefully wrought out in the preceding chapters, and difficulty vanishes.—This is also obvious from the need of there being, in reference to those who are justified, a thought corresponding to that, distinctly stated, in reference to those who are condemned; namely, *for that all have sinned*. Now, keeping in view the two companies, that is, the condemned and the justified under the two corresponding heads, Adam and Christ, we may employ in reference to the justified the corresponding formula, *for that they have all believed*; a formula not capable indeed, from the facts in the case, of application to men universally; but strictly applicable to *all* who are justified. Thus all the parts of this paragraph are in harmony with one another; and the paragraph is, indeed, a virtual, though extended and amplified, re-statement of the apostle's leading doctrine.—The work of Christ in reference to the human race is, indeed, such that all hindrances to God's reconciliation with men, and their acceptance with him, are removed, except only those which are in men's own breasts; so that God may be said to occupy the attitude of reconciliation to men, 2 Cor. 5: 19. John 3: 16, 17. 1 John 2: 2; and he stands ready to accept them as justified in his sight. Justification for the human family is procured, so far as the *relation* of God to them is concerned; and it is only requisite now that men, having a sense of their guilt and their need of redemption, should by faith in Christ, as the Redeemer, appropriate to themselves

20 Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound.  
 21 But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

this justification. The apostle, however, is evidently speaking, in this paragraph, of those who, by believing in Christ, have actually become partakers of justification, and, through discipleship to him, are becoming prepared for eternal life.

20. The apostle now returns to the thought suggested in the 13th verse, that sin is not reckoned to men's account in the absence of the law. This thought might appear to some to furnish a reason for the perpetual withholding of the law; for, if, while the law was withheld, sin was not charged, why would it not have been better to decline giving the law, and thus prevent the accumulation of sins? Why the law was introduced, then, was an important inquiry. This inquiry the apostle answers. It might have been, in part, appropriate to say, that the withholding of the law would not have so far prevented the commission of sin as also to prevent the reign of death, and secure eternal life to mankind. Men were sinners and would have perished, even if the law had not been introduced. No advantage, then, would have been gained by withholding the law, while yet an indispensable step to the felt necessity for a merciful redemption would not have been taken. The law must be introduced as a necessary historical step in the development of human character and wants, and as the means of awakening and deepening men's consciousness of being under sin, and of the helplessness and misery to which it subjects its victims, and thus as preliminary and preparatory to the scheme of redemption.—*The law*; the Mosaic law viewed in all its parts, though specially its moral principles. The apostle is still to be con-

ceived of as reasoning with Jews; while yet his argument connects itself with all men, since the moral principles of the Jewish code are but a clearer and fuller exhibition of the duties of all men, as grounded in their relation to God and their accountability to him, and as acknowledged in the moral consciousness of all men. || *That the offence might abound*; that transgressions might abound in number and aggravation. This was not the ultimate purpose of the law, but an intermediate and subordinate one for awakening a more vivid and distressing consciousness of personal guilt and of the need of redemption, and an appreciating sense of God's grace in providing the plan of salvation.—The agency of the law when distinctly applied to the souls of men in calling forth to activity their latent sinfulness, producing greater guilt and a deeper sense of the need of redemption, finds an illustration in the agency of some medical prescriptions which put the elements of disease into activity and would seem for a time to be only aggravating the disorder, while the intention and the result of the application may be to eradicate and remove the elements of disease. || *Grace did much more abound*. The loving kindness of God proved itself surpassingly great, however great became the sinfulness and ill desert of men.

21. Here appears the ultimate purpose of the introduction of the law; namely, that the reigning power of sin might be overcome, evidently and completely, by the immensely superior power of divine grace in securing righteousness and eternal life for men.—*That as sin hath reigned unto death, so, etc.*; that as sin has exerted

## CHAPTER VI.

Believers in Christ will not live in sin, since they are in union with him in respect to his death and his resurrection, and are not under the law, but under grace, 1-14. The grace of God by which believers are justified is incompatible with their living in sin, since those who live in sin are servants of sin, not servants of God, 15-22. The service of sin will be followed by its deserved recompence; while to those who are in Christ God gives eternal life, 23.

a kingly, despotic sway by reducing men to death, so, and in outweighing contrast, the grace of God should bear sway, displaying a kingly, supreme power in believers, through righteousness, issuing in eternal life. This righteousness and eternal life are by Jesus Christ: it is, consequently, the righteousness by faith in Christ, which thus magnifies the grace of God. It is the thought of *justification*, that is present to the apostle's mind; hence it is the *faith-righteousness*, that is here intended.—The mention of Jesus Christ as *our Lord* shows that, throughout this part of the chapter, *believers* in Christ are had in view, and not *men* universally, so far as justification is the topic of discourse. We should do violence to the apostle's language, were we to omit this thought, so perpetually and strongly stated in the preceding part of the reasoning. Faith in him is there represented as the cardinal principle of our justification; and this is necessary, in order that we may belong to his company and have him really as *our Lord*. The repetition of this in the summary view, which this chapter presents, was no more necessary, in the apostle's judgment, in order that he might not be misunderstood, than was the repeated statement, that men's own sins are the procuring cause of their condemnation, after having distinctly stated this in the 12th verse.

### CHAPTERS VI—VIII.

In 5: 20, the apostle had expressed the sentiment, that the abounding of transgression was to prove the occa-

sion of the abounding of divine grace in forgiving sin and rescuing men from its fatal sway. The thought might naturally arise in some minds that, according to this sentiment, liberty might be taken to indulge in sin in order to give opportunity for the display of divine grace in forgiving it and preventing its legitimate consequences. The apostle, therefore, takes up this thought and exposes its absurdity; and from this point proceeds to dilate on the sanctifying power of the gospel, showing that the faith in Christ which avails for justification also promotes holiness of heart and life, inspires the believer with filial love to God, imparts spiritual strength, and thus secures obedience to God.—He was thus led to a consideration of the gospel, as designed and adapted to secure holiness in believers, as well as their justification in the sight of God. This part of the epistle occupies the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters.

## CHAPTER VI.

The question now under consideration is, Whether believers, towards whom divine grace has abounded in their justification, may continue in sin, in order to give occasion for a more ample display of that grace. The question divides itself into two parts: in the first place, May believers continue in sin? In reply to this, the apostle states it as a well known and acknowledged sentiment, that believers in Christ are united with him in respect to his death for sin and in respect to his resurrection to a glorious life. Since, now, they are

1. **W**HAT shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into

*dead* in respect to sin, having fellowship with Christ in his death for sin, its sway over them is to cease, just as Christ, having once died for sin, is henceforth no more held liable to death, and they are henceforth *to live* in righteousness to the glory of God, as those who, in conformity to the resurrection of their Lord, and in fellowship with him as risen to a glorious life, have become spiritually alive through Jesus Christ. Since faith in Christ has reference to his *death* and his *resurrection*, that faith necessarily involves a renunciation of sin and an entering on a new life, a life of righteousness. Vs. 1-14.

Having disposed of the first part of the query, he proceeds to the second, which is presented in a somewhat modified form; namely, Whether the believer's being on the footing of grace, not of law, allows of his committing sin. To this a negative answer is given, on the ground that the obedience we render, whether to sin or to righteousness, shows whom we serve as our master, and consequently that those who live in sin are its servants, and not servants of God, as believers have avowed themselves to be. Believers, then, being servants of God, should surrender to him all their powers: God will bestow on them the gift of eternal life; while those who serve sin will receive the wages of sin. Vs. 15-23.

1. *Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?* Shall we still live in sin, on the ground that thereby we may give an opportunity for the grace of God to be more abundantly exercised and honored?

2. *God forbid.* See 3: 4. The apostle strongly protests against the thought presented in the preceding verse. *How shall we*, etc. With-

out affirming the obvious insincerity of a person who should make such a proposal, and without insisting that continuance in sin could not arise from a respect and love for God and from a desire to glorify his grace, but must be traced to a preference of sin and a supreme regard to one's own selfish gratification, the apostle confines himself to the question, Whether a believer in view of his character and profession of union with Christ can continue in sin? This question finds a prompt reply in the thought, that believers in Christ are dead to sin; that is, to its dominion and to the gratifications which it may promise. Continuance in sin would be utterly inconsistent with death to sin and life to God; to such a death, and such a life, believers have pledged themselves. || *Dead to sin*; dead to its power, so that it does not control us; dead to its attractions, so that we are not drawn towards it; dead to any claim which it might assert to our regard. || *How shall we . . . live any longer therein?* Death and life in respect to the same thing, do not co-exist: it would be absurd for a person who has renounced the claims of sin still to subject himself to those claims; absurd for a person whose affections have been withdrawn from sin, still to indulge in sinful desires and be governed by sinful principles. If we live in sin, we are not dead in respect to it: now, genuine believers are dead to sin and alive to righteousness, and consequently cannot live in sin. Sin is at variance with their inmost principles.

3. *Know ye not*, etc. The spiritual import of baptism was well known. By it a person professed to belong to Christ, avowing a participation in the death of Christ, a fellowship with him in respect to death, and an ob-

**4 his death ? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised up from the dead**

ligation to be conformed to him in respect to his death ; so that as he died, his follower has also become dead. As Christ died on account of sin, his followers, in avowing their union with him and pledging themselves to him, avow particularly their sharing with him in his death, having become dead to sin by virtue of their union with him, he being their Lord and they his people, he the Head and they his members. || *Baptized into Jesus Christ.* This phrase is indicative of baptism as a profession of discipleship to Christ ; baptism contains an avowal of our belonging to him as our Master, of our union with him as our Head : it is an acknowledgment of our obligation to obey him. — In the apostolic age, baptism was restricted to professed believers, and was the public act by which they bound themselves to the observance of his religion ; it was their public avowal of being disciples of Christ, and of belonging to his people. A similar expression occurs in 1 Cor. 10 : 2, where the Israelites are spoken of, figuratively, as having been *baptized unto* [in the original, *into*] *Moses* ; that is, as having avowed themselves the people of Moses, those who had submitted themselves to his guidance and acknowledged him as their leader. || *Were baptized into his death* ; into an avowed participation of his death. Compare verse 8. As Christ died, so his followers have died ; *He*, on account of sin, *they*, to sin, renouncing its claims and dominion, declaring and pledging themselves to be no longer in subjection to it : as he died in reference to sin, so they avow themselves dead in reference to sin : they have fellowship with Christ in his death for sin. Not that baptism introduces a person into a participation of death with Christ, in such a sense that it precedes the spiritual participation, or is essential to it; but baptism is the avowal of it, and by

this emblematic act the followers of Christ pledged themselves to such a death, and expressed their union with Christ in respect to his death.—Compare the similar phrase in Matt. 3 : 11, *to be baptized unto* [more properly, *into*] *repentance*, by which phrase baptism is indicated as an avowal of repentance, and as a pledge of entering on a penitent and righteous life. — If, now, we have been baptized into the death of Christ, this avowal of discipleship to him, as having died *for* sin, and of our having undergone a corresponding death, namely, death *to sin*, the moral state itself, in which we have avowed ourselves to be is utterly inconsistent with our living in sin, since, if we live in sin, we are not dead to it.

4. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.* By our baptism into Christ's death, and our thus avowing a participation of death with him, a fellowship with him in death, and an obligation to die with him in respect to sin, *we are buried with him*, we partake also of his burial, we have fellowship with him also in burial. The idea of *death* is here extended, so as to make it complete and to prepare the way for introducing the idea of a resurrection. Burial follows death, and is the last full and definite expression of death and of the ending of a person's connection with this world. This thought it was requisite for the apostle to present, in order to extend the analogy between Christ and the believer, so as to include the idea of a resurrection. As Christ has died, been buried, and has arisen from the dead to a glorious life, the believer, in like manner, having participated with Christ in death and burial, as is emblematically shown in baptism, has fellowship also with him in his resurrection, and rises from the death of trespasses and sins to a new life of righteousness. || *By the glory of the Father.* Perhaps our

by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that hence-

word *majesty* expresses the meaning of the word *glory* as here employed: and in the majesty of God, power, so strikingly manifested in the resurrection of Christ, is a distinguished element. In the resurrection of Christ from the dead, more than power, however, was displayed by the Father: wisdom, mercy, faithfulness, indeed all the divine perfections, were connected with that event; but the power of God first strikes the mind as producing it. Compare 1 Cor. 6: 14. || *Even so we also should walk in newness of life;* should lead a new life; an obedient, righteous life, in contrast with our life before we subjected ourselves to Christ; the new life differing from the old, somewhat as the present glorious life of Christ in heaven differs from his past life of humiliation and suffering on earth.—This participation with Christ, in death, burial and resurrection, would naturally associate itself in the minds of the earliest Christians with their baptism, because, in their day, baptism was, according to the literal meaning of the term, an immersion of the person. It was no empty ceremony; but a highly instructive and impressive transaction. Compare Col. 2: 12.

5. *For if*, etc. In this verse the apostle presents the ground of the view given in the preceding verse, as to believers' leading a new life: this participation with Christ in a life succeeding the death to sin, or their fellowship with Christ as risen, no less than as dead and buried, results from the truth that believers are *kindred with him* as to their affections and purposes, have a similar moral nature, having become most intimately united to him, so that what he underwent, and what he afterwards enjoyed, finds

a correspondence in them and may be naturally expected from them. || *We have been planted together in the likeness*, etc. A different rendering of the word here translated *planted together* would more directly express the apostle's thought: it is not, strictly, the idea of *planting* that was present to his mind, but that of *kindredship in nature* existing between Christ and his disciples, manifesting itself in respect to death and to resurrection, in regard to both of which there is *likeness* to Christ on the part of his followers. It is, then, similarity in moral nature that is here contemplated, as of persons *growing up together* with feelings and purposes harmonious. The apostle may be considered as saying, If we have been conjoined with Christ in respect to death, so as to bear a likeness to him, and thus are kindred with him as to death, this will not be the end of the kindredship and resemblance; but we shall also be kindred with him in bearing a resemblance to his resurrection: as he arose, so we shall arise; as he arose from the dead to enter on the life in heaven, so we shall arise from the death of sin to enter on the new life of holiness.

6. *Knowing this*, etc. The same idea, substantially, is here repeated in another form, as a sentiment of which no one, at all instructed in Christianity, could be ignorant.—|| *That our old man is crucified with him*; our former temper of mind, the sinful disposition which we formerly indulged, our former self, is crucified with Christ, has participated with Christ in crucifixion, and undergone a death as he did: we have fellowship with Christ in his crucifixion. The propensity to sin is here personified and regarded as an internal agent

7 forth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed

influencing our purposes and conduct, and subjecting the entire man, soul and body, to itself. This sinful disposition has, in believers, been made to participate with Christ in crucifixion: as Christ was crucified, so our sinful nature, our former sinful self, has, in company with him, been crucified, that its power might be broken, and that it might no longer subject our minds and bodies to its control.—Or, as Christ was crucified, so our corrupt inclination is crucified, is put to death, that we might no longer be held under its sway.—How interesting and impressive it is, to regard the Christian as, in respect to his former sinful inclination, undergoing a death; a crucifixion, in company with his Lord! This associating of himself with his Lord awakens tender sensibilities, and adds strength to resolution. The warmth of gratitude and love to Christ unites with a sense of duty, and the believer feels himself cheerfully constrained to give no allowance to sin. || *That the body of sin might be destroyed.* The design contemplated in this crucifixion of our former selves is, that we should no longer render service to sin in the use of our bodily powers; that the power which sinful propensities, originating some of them in the bodily nature and employing the body as the means of their gratification, should be broken and made void, and the soul, under the power of a new life, be devoted to God in its use of the body.—*The body of sin;* that is, the body, which has been a minister of sin, obeying its mandates; the body, which has been a source of temptation to sin, which has been the seat of many sinful gratifications, and the members of which have been the instruments of sin. *Sinful body* would be a suitable expression and in harmony with the idiom of the original, provided we carefully guard against the idea that sin is inherent in the body, instead of being a quality of

the soul. The body is a *sinful body*, not as being in itself sinful, for it is not by itself a moral agent; and if the soul with which it is connected, were completely holy, the body would, as in the case of our Lord, be a fit instrument for performing the soul's righteous desires and purposes: but it is *sinful*, as being the associate and instrument of a sinful soul, and as being the seat of many desires which a sinful soul perverts.—*Might be destroyed;* more strictly in accordance with the original, *might be made void*, might be divested of its power and lose its sway. || *That henceforth we should not serve sin.* The result is here stated, which is to be expected from the fact that the former disposition, or propensity, has been crucified, and that the bodily nature, formerly abused and brought under the sway of sin, has been deprived of its power to control and gratify; namely, that we should no longer serve sin, or be in subjection to it. Compare Col. 3: 1-3, 9, 10.

7. *For he that is dead is freed from sin.* The ground of the sentiment, advanced in verse 6, is here stated; namely, whoever is dead in reference to an authority that has been exercised over him, is no longer held bound by that authority, but is released from its sway. Compare 7: 1, 2. In conformity with this ground, he that is dead, that is, in the sense of which the apostle is speaking, dead to sin, having undergone a death in respect to it, is absolved from the sway of sin: sin, regarded as a master, can no longer hold him as its servant, or subject, to follow its bidding. *Freed from sin;* released, or absolved from its dominion. The expression in the original does not relate directly to moral purity, or personal holiness, but is a legal term, regarding sin, by personification, as a master having held control and asserted dominion over a person, as its slave; that dominion has ceased.

8 from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that  
 9 we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ, being  
 raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more  
 10 dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin  
 11 once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise  
 reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but

Sin is no longer his master; he is dead to its service. He that is dead in respect to sin, having participated with Christ in a crucifixion which had reference to sin, is no longer held as a bond slave to sin, but is absolved from its lordship.

8. Now, if, etc. Thus far the apostle has taken a negative view, regarding the disciple of Christ as *dead to sin*, and not held by its sway. He now passes to the positive view. The disciple participated with Christ in the fact of having a new *life*: he has fellowship with Christ in respect to life as well as to death. We have *died with Christ*; we resemble him, and participate with him, in regard to death; we shall, also, *live with him*; we shall resemble him, and participate with him, in regard to life. || *We believe*. The belief that we, who have become dead to sin, and are in this respect conjoined with Christ, shall also be conjoined with him in respect to life, and shall lead a new life, a life of righteousness, is grounded on the fact that Christians have a spiritual union with Christ, and consequently that between him and them there is harmony in the chief points of character and condition. Thus in respect to life as well as death, genuine Christians will exemplify a fellowship with him.

9. *Knowing that Christ being raised*, etc. Christ, having been raised from the dead, is no more liable to death: henceforth, death has no power over him, and he will have no occasion to subject himself again to its power. His disciples are united to him, as their Head; and as they participated in a death corresponding to his, have had fellowship with him in his death, they will participate with him in freedom

from death, being delivered from the death of trespasses and sins; they will participate with him, also, in a life corresponding to his, a spiritual life, a life of righteousness; they will have fellowship with him also in his life.

10. *For in that he died, he died unto sin once*, etc. That Christ is now forever free from death, having once submitted to it and having been raised from the dead, follows from the fact that the design which he came to accomplish was answered by dying *once*; but the life to which he arose, having reference to God and the advancement of God's dominion, must, from the nature of the case, be an ever-during life. To overthrow sin, to destroy its dominion, could be secured by his *once for all* dying and thus stripping sin of its power. His relation to sin was but temporary, and a *once for all* dying secured his object; but his relation to God is an ever-during one, and requires continued, endless, life: his state, henceforth, therefore, is to be a state of life.

11. *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead*, etc. Since then Christ has died on account of sin, and is henceforth free from liability to death, leading a glorious life with reference to the consummation of God's purposes, the followers of Christ ought to regard themselves as, in like manner, dead to sin, acknowledging its sway no longer, and as alive to the claims of God and the advancement of his honor. || *Through Jesus Christ*, etc.; by virtue of spiritual union with him, or of being in him. If we are united to Christ and belong to him, we should be like him, as to the death he underwent, so far as the *design* of it is concerned; we

12 alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it  
 13 in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your  
 14 members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God: for sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

should also be like him, as to the life he is now leading, so far as respects its *design* of carrying forward the divine purpose of redemption.

12-14. An exhortation now follows, grounded on the view of Christians as being spiritually alive, alive to the claims and the honor of God, and as having renounced the dominion of sin, having become dead to it, so that it should no longer govern them.—*Let not sin reign; bear sway, like a king.* || *In your mortal body.* The body being the instrument which sin, in so many instances, employs, and the soul conceived of as residing in it, the expression is a very natural one, that *sin rules in the body*. The epithet *mortal*, here added, preserves the idea of death as connected with the body; since not only is the body soon to die, and therefore it ought not to be allowed a governing influence, but withal it subjects to *death*, in the higher sense, those who yield to its demands in disregard of the claims of God and of the spiritual nature. || *That ye should obey it in the lusts thereof;* that ye should obey sin which seeks to lord it over you, as a ruling power, through the inordinate desires of the body, desires which originate in the body, or are gratified in the body, or pertain in various ways to our present bodily state.—The word *it* relates to *sin*, and the word *thereof* to the *body*. The verse may become more intelligible by the following paraphrase—Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, so that you shall obey sin by yielding to the body's inordinate desires:—the body

being here considered as the seat of many sinful indulgences, as the occasion of many sins, or the instrument which sin employs; while yet all sin, whether relating to the body and the outward estate, or to the spirit of man, is here cautioned against.

13. The same idea, substantially, is again presented in an expanded form. Two masters, as it were, are here spoken of, to whose service the powers of man will be yielded, sin and God: Christians should not be in subjection to sin, but should yield themselves willing servants to God.—*Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, etc.*; yield not the members of your body to sin. Our bodily powers are not to be surrendered to sin, as its instruments or tools, to do its bidding: we are to yield ourselves to God, to choose him for our Master, as those who have died to sin, who have become insensible to its demands and are liberated from its bondage, and who have arisen to a new life, being no more dead in sin, but alive to righteousness. || *And your members unto God;* and yield your members unto God, as instruments of righteousness.

14. The ground of the exhortation in verses 12, 13, or rather of encouragement to obey it, is now presented.—*For sin shall not have dominion over you;* sin is not to lord it over you. The control of sin over you is broken; you are liberated from its power: yield yourselves, therefore, to God.—But how comes it to pass, that sin has not dominion over the disciple of Christ, that he is liberated from

## 15 WHAT then? shall we sin, because we are not under the

its power and is no longer its bond-slave? The reason immediately follows. || *For ye are not under the law, but under grace.* The apostle here alludes to the moral principle which he fully expands and illustrates in chapter 7: 7-25; namely, that the influence of a law, prohibiting a sinful desire, stimulates that desire, when directly encountering it, rather than deadens the desire; it does not restrain the sinful heart from seeking gratification; so that if a sinner be under the power of mere law, and his heart be not in full concert with the law, he will break it and incur its penalty. But genuine disciples of Christ are not under law, not under a legal system, since by their reception of Christ, as a Redeemer from condemnation and sin, they are under a different dispensation, and stand on a different footing, in relation to God, from the legal one: thus the law, as a governing system, is not their lord, they are dead to its claims for a justifying obedience on their part, and to its doom of death for disobedience. They do not stand in a legal relation to God, and are not treated by him as if they were on that footing. Legal influences are not those by which they are moved. Looked at from a legal position, they are dead to the law, 7: 4; the law has ceased to have a hold on them. On the contrary, they are *under grace*; under a system of mercy and favor, in which God acts towards them on the principle of *favor on his part, not of good desert on theirs*: the system is one of gratuities, not of merited compensation for obedience to law. Being placed on such a footing, and having a new spirit in harmony with this method of treatment, and with its design of recovering them from sin, they can, though ill-deserving, be treated with positive favor, be accepted of God, and reclaimed from sin; they can be adopted as children of God, and enjoy the benefits of

the filial relation, and the favorable treatment and discipline which that relation involves. Gratitude for God's love to them, and all generous emotions, are cherished, and the affectionate purpose of obedience which is characteristic of their new heart, is confirmed. By virtue of this new system, the Holy Spirit awakens and strengthens in them love to God, as their controlling principle. The spiritual influence bestowed, and the ingenuous feelings excited, by this new system, overcome sinful tendencies, and affectionate filial obedience to God is secured. By this system, provision is made for renewing power, pardoning mercy, and influence to strengthen the disciple in the course of righteousness. For these things a legal system makes no provision. Hence proceeds the encouragement to the disciples of Christ, that sin shall not have dominion over them; they are not under law, but under grace.

15-23. Having shown the utter incongruity of a sinful life with a believer's relation to Christ, as united to him in death, and with his own avowed character and obligations, the apostle proceeds to the second part of the query proposed in the first verse, the query being slightly modified. A person, who did not properly apprehend the relation of grace in which the disciple of Christ stands, might naturally think that if a believer be not under law, but under grace, he would take encouragement to indulge in sin.—Hence the question, If we are not under the law, but are on a footing of grace, or favor, may we not then sin with impunity? What hindrance is there to our sinning, if we are not held by the law? The apostle repels this suggestion by maintaining, that if we commit sin we are servants of sin, and consequently not servants of God, and must, therefore, receive the recompence of sin. The

16 law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of 17 obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of 19 righteousness: (I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh:) for as ye have yielded your

idea of two masters is again presented, or of two opposite principles exercising control; sin on the one hand, obedience on the other: and these two opposite principles, or kinds of service, are to be followed by their appropriate results.—The word *servants* throughout this paragraph, vs. 15–23, whether in reference to sin or in reference to righteousness, is used as the opposite of *free*, or *freed*, *men*; and men are here conceived of as being in subjection, that is, in servitude, either to sin, or to righteousness; the servants of sin being in subjection to *their* master and not owning the sway of righteousness, but living as if *free* from its sway and not bound by its claims; and on the other hand, the servants of righteousness being in subjection to *their* master, not owning the sway of sin, but being *freed* from it, emancipated from it. In both cases, the bondage is voluntary and involves the idea of personal responsibility as to the choice of masters. In the one case, however, inclination governs the person in disregard of the dictates of his reason and conscience, so that he is, emphatically, in a state of bondage: while in the other case, subjection to righteousness is in perfect harmony with the free action of all the powers of man, the reason, the will, the affections. The latter is, in brief, the only normal state of man, as a moral being.

16. *To whom ye obey.* The word to is here, in our modern style, superfluous. || *Unto death*; unto utter misery, spiritual and eternal death,

as the result of the service of sin. || *Unto righteousness.* The word *righteousness* here includes the idea of *justification* and its result, eternal life, standing as the opposite of *death*, or condemnation.

17. *But God be thanked*, etc. In applying the universal principle, contained in the 16th verse, to those whom he was addressing, the apostle renders thanks to God that, though they were formerly in bondage to sin, they had, from the heart, obeyed the gospel and become interested in its influences and blessings. || *That ye were*, etc. The cause for gratitude was the obedience which the Roman Christians had rendered to the gospel.—In a sentence constructed like this, the point aimed at by the writer, or speaker, is contained in the latter part. Compare Matt. 9: 14. || *That form of doctrine*, etc.; the gospel of Christ, conceived of as a religious system, a form, or scheme, of religious doctrine, mentioned with particular reference to the doctrine of justification and deliverance from sin by faith in Christ.

18. *Being then made free*, etc.; being now emancipated, liberated, from sin, ye have subjected yourselves, as servants, to righteousness: being freed from the yoke of sin, ye have come under the yoke of righteousness.

19. *I speak after the manner of men*, etc.; I address you in a manner suggested by human affairs.—The Romans were well acquainted with slavery, as it was a condition common in their country; and this sub-

members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteouness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death : but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ject furnished modes of expression well suited to illustrate deliverance from sin and subjection to God, and to impress the minds of those who were not accustomed to spiritual and elevated contemplations. Though the service of God is not slavery, but a willing obedience, yet submission to God, and the surrender of all our powers to his will, would be at once apprehended, particularly by weaker minds, through this manner of speaking. The experience, also, which Christian readers had had of spiritual frailty, and of subjection to bodily appetites and other modes of sinful gratification, would help them to appreciate the apostle's language. — This clause, though it stands in our version, as a part of the 19th verse, is yet more properly an appendage to the 18th, as it evidently relates to the terms employed in that verse. || *For as ye have, etc.* Since they had become liberated from sin, and had become subject to righteousness, they were expected to live accordingly. || *Your members :* your bodily members. || *To uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity,* etc. ; to unchastity with its kindred defilements, and to general disregard of God's law, so as freely to practise iniquity. Instead of continuing such a course, employ your members, now, in the service of righteousness, so as to be truly holy.

20. *For when ye were the servants of sin, etc. ; while ye were slaves of sin, ye were free in respect to righteousness ; that is, ye felt and acted,*

as if exempted from the claims of righteousness, ye rendered it no service, ye abjured its claims, sin being your acknowledged master. This fact is here stated as an argument for the preceding exhortation ; as if the apostle had said, Do justice now to the claims of righteousness which you formerly disowned.

21, 22. To strengthen the exhortation, he appeals to their own judgment and feelings, as to the results of these opposite courses, one of them issuing in present shame and self-reproach and terminating, hereafter, in utter misery ; the other securing the satisfactions of holiness in heart and conduct, and terminating, hereafter, in endless bliss. — *What fruit, etc. ; what profit did you gain from the unworthy deeds which you formerly practised ? || Death ;* the utter misery consequent on being excluded from the favor of God.

22. He now presents the opposite spiritual condition and its opposite results. — *Being made free, etc. ; being emancipated from sin, and come into subjection to God, having chosen him for your Master. || Ye have your fruit unto holiness, etc. ; you have the profit, the advantage, of holiness, which is accompanied with happiness on earth and issues in eternal life, in the endless bliss which springs from the presence and favor of God in heaven.*

23. These opposite results are easily explained. *For the wages of sin is death. Sin pays its servants their wages, namely, death. The mis-*

## CHAPTER VII.

**Believers in Christ, not under the legal system, 1-6. Bondage of the human soul while under a legal system, 7-25.**

ery consequent on exclusion from the presence and favor of God, is the appropriate recompence of sin. But while death is awarded to the servant of sin as his due, life eternal is bestowed on the servants of God, not as what they may claim, in the light of a payment, but as a free gift from him through Christ. Having received Christ as their Redeemer and Lord, they are regarded as united to him, as belonging to him, and are, therefore, admitted to the blessings which he has secured, and for which they have here become prepared.

### CHAPTER VII.

Having disposed of the inquiry whether Christians may sin because they are not under law but under grace, the apostle now returns to the sentiment advanced in 6 : 14, which had suggested this inquiry ; namely, sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace. That Christians are not under the law, and in what manner their removal from a legal position has been effected, he shows in 7 : 1-6 ; that they could not obtain deliverance from the bondage of sin while under the law, or while in a state of *legal* relation to God, he illustrates in 7 : 7-25 ; and thus prepares the way for showing that deliverance comes to them through the state of grace provided by the gospel, and that those who are truly in Christ, united to him by faith, are freed from condemnation and from the servitude of sin. This is brought to view in 7 : 25 and in chapter 8th.

In order to show that the disciples of Christ are not under the law, but are removed from a legal relation to a relation of grace, he states and applies the principle, that a law is of

force over a person only so long as, by the continuance of life, he is in a condition to be bound by it ; it contemplates a person as *alive* and in such circumstances as the law recognizes : *death*, however, intervening, sets aside the action of the law in reference to a person whose relations are by that occurrence essentially altered. In such a case the hold of a law ceases. Thus, a married woman is bound by the law to her husband. During his life-time, she cannot unite herself to another without incurring guilt : but should her husband *die*, the law, in that particular, has no application to her ; it has lost its hold, and she is dead in regard to it. She is now at liberty to marry another. As the woman, in consequence of the death of her husband, became dead to that provision of the law and was at liberty to enter into the marriage relation with another, so by the death of Christ, as illustrating and vindicating the righteousness of God, 3 : 25, 26, the demands of the legal system are met and fully satisfied, and without any infraction of it, or disregard of it, men are at liberty to enter on a new arrangement, to transfer their allegiance from the law to Christ as the head of a new system, thus coming from under the demands and penalties of the law. Those who accept Christ, or become united to him, are dead to the law, or the legal system, by virtue of Christ's death and their participating in death with him, 6 : 8, or their union with him as one who has died. As the husband's death makes the wife dead in respect to a particular statute, so Christ's death makes believers in him dead to the legal system. By virtue of their connection with him, they occupy a different ground from that of the law ; from the domain of law they have

1 KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long  
 2 as he liveth? For the woman which hath a husband, is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her  
 3 husband. So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.  
 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we

passed to that of grace, and are to be dealt with, not according to the demands of law, but according to the provision of God's grace. While under the law, in their sinful state, they could live only in disobedience to the law and become doomed to its penalty, death; but now, being united to Christ and enjoying the provision and influences of the system of grace, they enter on a new life towards God, render service to him and are accepted by him.

1. *The law.* It is immaterial for the purpose of the illustration here intended, whether the apostle meant law in the abstract, or the Mosaic code, as an actual system, in particular; for in either case, law in respect to human society contemplates men as living; it does not extend beyond death; death puts an end to its control. Thus viewed, the apostle's reasoning may be considered as grounded in the universal sentiments of men. His readers, too, were sufficiently acquainted with the nature of law to appreciate his argument, whether they were Jews by birth, or were Jewish proselytes, or had become Christians directly from a state of heathenism. When, however, we consider the apostle's habits of thought in regard to law, and those of the majority, at least, of his earliest readers, it is most reasonable to think that he had in mind the Mosaic code. This would appear,

also, from the connection between the present paragraph and the 14th verse of the 6th chapter, where the Mosaic legal system is mentioned in contrast with the Christian system of grace.  
 || *A man*; a human being, a person.  
 || *So long as he liveth*; that is, only so long as he liveth.

2. An illustration of the statement, just made by the apostle, now follows. *For the woman which hath on husband.* The form of expression in the original is, *the woman who is in subjection to a man*; and this view of a married woman's relation, as being in subjection to her husband, is specially adapted to the apostle's purpose of instituting a parallel between a married woman, in reference to her husband, and human beings, in reference to the law of God to which they are, from their very nature, subject.  
 || *She is loosed from the law of her husband*; from the law which defines and regulates her relation to her husband. From this law she is released by the death of her husband; his death terminates her subjection to him.

3. *So then*, etc. Though during his life she could not rightfully take a different husband, yet his death puts her at liberty to do so. Her husband's death made her dead to that law, so that there is no legal hindrance to her forming another connection.

4. The parallel case is now stated. It is not, however, stated with minute

5 should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did

accuracy, but *substantially* and with the particular reference to the event of *death*, as opening the way for a change of relation. In applying the illustration, the apostle, since he wished to present distinctly and strongly the main thought, that Christians are dead to the law, and are not under it, commences with the *death in reference to believers* which the death of Christ had effected. *Ye also are become dead to the law*; you are released from the law as to its demands and penalties, you are to it as dead, it has lost its dominion in respect to you. || *By the body of Christ*; by the body of Christ as having been put to death; by the death of Christ.—As if the apostle had said, Christ has died, and you as being united to Christ, share in the results of his death. By his death the demands of the law were satisfied; and on you, consequently, as being united with him, it has no further demands. A husband's death terminates the wife's subjection to a particular statute, in consequence of her having been one with him and of her sharing in whatever affected him: so Christ's death has terminated the Christian's subjection to the legal system in consequence of his union with Christ and sharing in whatever affects Him.—The idea of union with Christ pervades the apostle's view; to apprehend it fully, we should have in mind the figure of the vine and its branches, John 15: 1-7, the body and its members, Eph. 5: 23-32. *Oneness with Christ* would not be too strong an expression to show the bearing on Christ's disciples of whatever pertains to him. Compare John 17: 21-23. || *That ye should be married to another*; that ye should become another's, that ye might enter into relation with another. || *Even to him who is raised from the dead*. Christ, as raised from the dead, is the Lord and Head with whom this new con-

nexion may be formed. He is the head of the system of grace to which we may become transferred from the bondage of the law. || *That we should bring forth fruit unto God*; that we might be fruitful in works of obedience to God, might render him acceptable service in holy lives. The resurrection of Christ was necessary for this, because the bestowal of the Holy Spirit for our renovation to a holy life was to be consequent on his resurrection. John 16: 7. The resurrection and ascension of Christ were essential to the completeness and the full operation of the system of grace. 1 Pet. 3: 21, 22. Matt. 28: 18-20. The Holy Spirit's agency in this system makes us new creatures in our will and affections, gives us a new spirit, delivers us from the domination of sin, so that we do not yield our powers to its sway. 6: 17, 18.

5. *For when we were in the flesh*. The apostle now shows why we must become connected with Christ as raised from the dead, in order that we may be fruitful in obedience to God; that is, why we must become released from the legal system and come under the system of grace, in order to lead holy lives.—*In the flesh*. Our bodily nature gives occasion and opportunity for many sinful indulgences: the bodily members are instruments which sin employs. 6: 12, 13. *To be in the flesh*, then, is to be in subjection to sinful appetites. It is the opposite of being *in the Spirit*, that is, in subjection to the Spirit, or of being in a renewed, spiritual state. *Flesh* is the carnal nature, taken comprehensively, as including sins of the spirit, as well as of the body. || *The motions of sins, which were by the law*; the emotions of sins, or sinful affections, which were awakened, excited, by the law; sinful affections which, through abuse of the law, made it a provocative of sin, instead of its being a director in holy

**6** work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death: but now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

obedience. || *Wrought in our members*; became vigorously active in subjecting our bodily members to the service of sin, so that, instead of being fruitful in obedience to God, we were fruitful in obedience to Death: death being here personified, as the power which executes the doom of exclusion from the presence and favor of God.

**6.** But now; now that we are *not in the flesh*, but in the *Spirit*, in subjection to the Holy Spirit and enjoying his renewing influence, we are no longer under the law, we are released from it as a system for procuring the divine favor; we are no longer held bound by its demands which we could not satisfy and which, instead of being obeyed by us, would rather awaken and stimulate sinful affections in us and thus, instead of procuring us salvation, would make as work out our ruin. || *That being dead wherein we were held*. The genuine reading here, according to correct editions of the original Greek, is, *being dead, or having become dead to that in which, or by which, we were held*: not that the *law* is dead, but *we* are dead to the *law*. The apostle describes those who have accepted the system of grace, by uniting themselves to Christ who submitted to death, verse 4, as having become dead to the *law*, to the legal system, under which they were previously held. The idea is the same as is conveyed in the 4th verse, Ye are become dead to the *law*. || *That we should serve in newness of spirit*, etc. The result of this death to the *law*, this transfer of ourselves to the system of grace, and of this choice of Christ as our Redeemer and Lord is, that we now render service to God with a new spirit, a new temper of mind, a spirit which prompts a cheerful and loving obedi-

ence, as coming spontaneously from the heart which beats in unison with that of Christ. This *new spirit* is contrasted with the *oldness of the letter*, or, of the *writing*, that is, the *old written law*, the system of statutes and penalties, the system which could only require obedience to authoritative demands as the ground of acceptance with God, while yet the hearts of men were indisposed to obedience. From subjection to this system and from the fatal results which, since men have no heart to obey the *law*, are inevitable, Christ delivers all who welcome him as their Lord.—The apostle does not here intimate that, in point of fact, there ever were two ways for men's acceptance with God; one, through a personal legal obedience; the other, through divine grace. The latter has been the only possible way ever since man became a sinner. But he is here reasoning with special reference to Jews, who were vainly cherishing the thought that, through obedience to the Mosaic law, they were enjoying favor with God and would attain eternal life. Taking them on their own ground, he unfolds the nature and tendency of a legal system and of the system of grace, in view of the actual state of men's hearts, and thus shows the necessity of the gracious system through Christ, of which, since all need it, all may avail themselves. Though the salvation of men has always proceeded from grace, yet it is only in the gospel of Christ that the system of grace is fully made known and developed, since its basis is in the life and death of Christ. Previously to his advent, men who had the right temper of mind were pardoned and accepted; still, their acceptance was an act of grace, having the same re-

7 WHAT shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

lation to Christ as the acceptance of penitent and believing sinners under the gospel, or subsequently to the actual death of Christ. See Heb. 9: 15. Compare Rev. 13: 8. While, however, salvation has always been impossible for sinners by a legal system, no mistake is more common than for men to suppose that by some works of righteousness of their own they can obtain favor with God: and hence, the apostle's reasoning has value for *all* men. For whoever, through any causes, declines the proposals of the gracious system and seeks eternal life according to the terms of a legal system, must fail of becoming righteous in the sight of God and of having spiritual life, because he is actually a sinner and a legal system contains no provision for acceptance after disobedience, or for recovering sinners to holiness: he will also inevitably fail of rendering such an obedience as the holy law prescribes, because in his inmost heart he is indisposed to such obedience; and any supposed obedience to mere authority, while the authority is disliked and the heart is not in accordance with the law, is of no account in the sight of God.

7-12. *What shall we say then, etc.* In 6: 14 the apostle had said, Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law; implying, that sin would rule over them so long as they should be under the law. This might seem a reflection on the law, as though it gave aid to sin and was of a sinful tendency. He had also just said, 7: 5, that sinful affections were stimulated by the law. The inquiry then would naturally arise, Whether the law was sinful, the blamable cause of sin. He replies, By no means: nevertheless, the law becomes the occasion of activity to a sinful inclination, the existence

of which was hardly before suspected. Thus the law leads to a distinct consciousness of sin and illdesert, and of inability, under the influence and guidance of the law, to secure eternal life; a sinful disposition being excited, by the law's laying restraints on it, to resist the law and thus inevitably incurring its penalty, death, spiritual ruin. The law, then, so far from being sinful, or in itself the cause of sin, is holy, opposed to all sin. Viewed in itself and as a directory to an obedient spirit, it leads to life and bliss.

7. *Is the law sin?* Is the law sinful? Is it the cause of sin? Is its tendency sinful? || *God forbid.* See 3: 4. || *Nay.* The word *nevertheless*, or *still*, represents more accurately the apostle's word. He had strongly disavowed the thought, that the law was sinful; but while that thought was not, for a moment, to be entertained, it was *still*, or *nevertheless*, true that the law was a means of producing a distinct consciousness of sin. While it does not lead to sin, but forbids it, it is yet an occasion of sin's exerting its power, and thus makes us sensible that we are sinners. || *For I had not known lust, except, etc.* By a particular commandment in the law, the apostle illustrates his thought that the law leads to a distinct consciousness of sin. The word *lust* was formerly used in a more general sense than at present, and was equivalent to *inordinate desire* or *coveting*. In the original of this verse and the following, the same word, substantially, is used for *lust*, *covet*, and *concupiscence*; so that the apostle's idea in the 7th and 8th verses might be more directly conveyed by the following language—*For I should not have known coveting, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet; but sin, taking occasion by the command-*

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once : but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

ment, wrought in me all manner of coveting.

8. *Sin, taking occasion, etc.* Sin is here regarded as an active internal power. Sinful inclination, stimulated by this prohibition, became unusually vigorous. Such is human experience ; a latent and dormant inclination to a certain thing becomes aroused, and demands gratification, in consequence of a prohibition to its indulgence. || *Without the law, etc.* aside from the law, at a distance, so to speak, from the law, sin lay inactive, had not betrayed its existence and power.

9. *For I was alive without the law once, etc.* up to a certain period, while away from the pressure of the law, not distinctly apprehending and feeling its claim on me, I was free from disquietude, was happy in my supposed enjoyment of the good will of God and a sure hope of heaven. But when the commandment, mentioned in verse 7, came in contact with me and I felt its pressure, then sin put forth a new life in resisting the command and promising gratification from disobeying it, and I sunk into misery through a sense of guilt and apprehension of the displeasure of God. My consciousness of being under the power of sin destroyed my enjoyment and my hope of future bliss, and made me sensible that I had within me no spiritual life.

10. *The commandment, etc.* That very commandment which pointed out the path of righteousness and was thus designed to secure life, that is, true bliss, issued in producing death to me.

11. *For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, etc.* when the commandment, the prohibition mentioned in verse 7, was distinctly apprehended by me and its force was felt, sin promised me gratification from disobedience ; but it deceived my expectation of enjoyment and wrought out misery for me instead of happiness : it slew me, brought me into a state of death, making me sensible of my subjection to depraved inclinations, of my condemnation in the sight of God and my inability, by any moral strength of my own, to avert his displeasure and attain eternal life. I felt myself doomed to death, as a deluded victim of sin.

12. *Wherefore the law is holy, etc.* Since, then, the law is only the occasion of sin by coming in collision with a sinful inclination and laying its prohibitions on it, the law itself is holy, announcing the holy will of God in opposition to all sin ; and every commandment of the law, like the one instanced in verse 7, is holy, just and good in its requisition and its tendencies.

13-25. The view just given of the law of God suggests another inquiry : Was that which is a good thing and adapted to secure bliss, namely, the holy and good law of God, made the cause of death to me ? Is my death, that is, my loss of the divine favor and my exclusion from all bliss and hope, the fruit of a good law ? By no means, the apostle replies : Sin is the cause of this death ; and since it brings about death by occasion of a law which is in itself holy and good, the nature of sin, as only evil and

13. *Was* then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment 14 might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law

malignant, becomes thereby fully manifest. The law, too, as we all know, is *spiritual*, requiring a spiritual, or holy, obedience and a *spiritual* mind in order to render such obedience, and recompensing such obedience with eternal life: but I, on whom the demands of this law came with pressure, am *carnal*, sinful, even in bondage to sin; and being thus under its sway, sin controls me, so that the dictates of my judgment and moral nature, which approve of the divine law, are overmastered, and I do not act according to my convictions of right; that which I approve I fail to perform; that which I condemn and cannot but hate, I yet do. Sin overpowers me; so that it is not so much I who act, as sin that lords it over me. It is sin, then, to which I am in bondage, that is working out my ruin; and not the holy and good law. Thus miserably enslaved by sin, I can be delivered from its power, and from the death to which it inevitably leads, only by ceasing vainly to strive for spiritual life and the favor of God by means of the law, and by coming into the state of grace through faith in Christ, that is, through uniting myself to him as the head of the system of grace, my Redeemer and Lord, and thus securing to myself the benefits and influences of this system.

13. *That which is good*; the law, mentioned in verse 12. || *That it might appear sin*: rather, that sin might be made to appear, that it might be manifested as to its evil and malignant nature and be no longer concealed under a deceitful garb. Compare verse 11. || *That sin — might become exceeding sinful*; that sin might, by occasion of the commandment, go to great lengths in transgressing the law, and thus, by means

of the law which forbade its indulgence, it might become worse and worse. Compare 5: 20.

14. *For we know*. It is not surprising that sin should thus abuse the law of God and increase its violations of it. This the apostle regards as resulting from the spiritual, or holy, nature of the law acting on a mind that is sinfully inclined and is in bondage to sin as its ruling power. || *The law is spiritual*; it requires a spiritual, or holy, service, and consequently a *spiritual* mind in order to render that service. || *But I am carnal*. So far from having the needed spiritual mind, I am *carnal*, fleshly, disposed to obey the impulses and indulge the appetites of the flesh, instead of obeying the dictates of the Spirit. I am the very opposite of what is required. — As the body, or the flesh, is the seat of so many sinful appetites, and the members of the body are the means by which a sinful inclination gratifies itself, *to be in the flesh*, or *to be carnal*, is the same as *to be sinful*, *to be under the influence of sin*, *to be sinfully disposed*. It is expressive, therefore, of *sinfulness*, a source of sin, a sinful state, in general, whether the sins consist in bodily indulgence, or are strictly internal. Compare Gal. 5: 19-21. It is the opposite of being *spiritual*, of being *under the influence of the Holy Spirit* which awakens holy desires and leads to a holy life. A *carnal*, or *unspiritual*, mind is affirmed of all persons, whether unregenerate or regenerate, so far as they are not in subjection to the Holy Spirit in their feelings and conduct: hence, it was ascribed to the Corinthian Christians, 1 Cor. 3: 3, 4, who had so far lost the truly Christian temper of mind as to be indulging in dissensions; a course of conduct more characteristic of worldly men

15 is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; 16 but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would 17 not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. Now then it is 18 no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I

than of the spiritually minded. || *Sold under sin*; bought, as it were, by sin and reduced to bondage by it as an imperious master, so as to do its bidding rather than what my own sober judgment would dictate.

15. The proof, or illustration, of the remark that he was a bondslave of sin, now follows. As a slave is subject to the will and command of his master and thus acts by another's bidding, not by his own judgment and choice, and may not be pleased with what he is doing, nor approve of it, and might seem to himself to be often acting without knowing what he was doing, so it is with one in bondage to sin.—*For that which I do I allow not*; literally, *I know not*; I scarcely know what I am doing, I am so impelled by a power that sways me and overrides my sober convictions.—The original word, here rendered *allow*, but more correctly *know*, has sometimes the accessory idea of *approving*, that is, of *knowing with approval*. The idea of *allowing* and *disallowing*, or of *approval* and *disapproval*, is, however, more directly expressed in the following clause; while this clause rather indicates a mind doubting whether to do a thing or not, beclouded by sinful desire, half willing and half-unwilling to do the sinful deed, and yet yielding to sinful desire, as if impelled, without being fully aware of thus doing. || *For what I would, that do I not*, etc. The term *would* here is indicative of the desire, or preference, which the soul of man cannot but feel for that which is morally good, when it is soberly reflected on. It does not indicate a settled, determined choice, but a *liking*, or *wishing*. The apostle, then, may be understood as saying, For what I like, what in itself and accord-

ing to my sober judgment I approve, and wish to do, I do not perform; but what I cannot help hating, that I actually do. So truly has sinful inclination the mastery, that I sacrifice my sober preferences to it; I am held bound by sinful desire; under its influence, what I prefer I fail to do, but what I dislike and condemn that I do: such is the power of sin over me. Compare Gal. 5: 17.

16. *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law*, etc. Since, then, in my judgment I disapprove of what I do in transgressing, and dislike it, I thereby pronounce in favor of the law which forbids what I do: the law has a testimony in my reason and conscience that it is really good. Compare verse 12.

17. *Now then it is no more I that do it but sin*, etc. Now, too, since I pronounce in favor of the law which I violate, and since I do not act in harmony with my convictions of what is right, but in opposition to them, it is henceforth not I myself, I in the full and free exercise of the faculties of my nature, I as endowed with reason and conscience, who act; but sin that dwells in me is the acting power. Sin, an imperious master within me, performs the deeds through me.—The apostle here personifies sin, representing it as a personal agency within the soul, lording it over the rational and moral nature: as though there were two opposing powers within him, reason with conscience, on one side, and sinful desire, on the other; and sinful desire actually having the predominance and controlling his actions. Without a figure, it is strong sinful inclination, a bent towards sin, the apostle here speaks of, that impels a person to a sinful act, or course, in opposition to his rea-

18 know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing : for to will is present with me ; but *how* to perform 19 that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, 20 I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin 21 that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would 22 do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law 23 of God, after the inward man : but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the 25 body of this death ? I thank God, through Jesus Christ

knowledgment of the claims of God's law and to the dictates of his sober judgment.

18-20. In confirmation of the thought that *sin* was the actor, the apostle declares it as a matter of his consciousness that in him viewed as *carusal*, destitute of the Holy Spirit, *goodness* did not dwell, as a predominating power; since while to like and wish for what is good was near him, to perform what is good was far away from him, he could not reach it : the one was within his reach, was easy ; the other was far beyond him, he found not access to it, his efforts to attain it were baffled.—*In me, that is, in my flesh*; in me, while, or so far as, under the influence of *the flesh*, or unspiritual : so far as the Spirit is not ruling me, goodness does not dwell in me ; it is sin that actuates me. Compare Gal. 5 : 17. || *For to will is present with me*, etc.; to like and prefer what is good is within my reach, but actually to do it is beyond me ; for sin sways me and not goodness, and I do the evil, notwithstanding my convictions of duty and my sense of the preferableness of the good.

21. *I find then a law*, etc. ; I find within me a governing principle, which, though I cannot but like, and approve of, the good, makes me do the evil : evil is ever near at hand and I yield to it, notwithstanding my discernment of the right and the decision of my judgment in its favor.

22, 23. The proof, or illustration, of this predominating power of sin, in the absence of the Spirit, is now given in a very emphatic manner.—*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man* ; that is, in my soul : my judgment and moral convictions are decidedly in favor of the law of God, and I take delight in contemplating it. But I perceive in my members, in my bodily, or sensual, nature, another law, another ruling principle, namely, sinful appetite, opposing the law which my rational and moral nature approves, and subjugating me, as a captive, to the law of sin, that law which rules in my bodily members and subjects my sensual nature to itself.

24. *O wretched man*, etc. Thus being a captive to sin and acting according to its impulses rather than to my own sober judgment and moral sense, I am a wretch indeed, and despair of rescuing myself from this bondage. || *Who shall deliver me?* Is there any one who can deliver me ? To whom can I look for deliverance ? || *From the body of this death* ; or, from this body of death ; from this body, this sensual nature, which sin subjects to itself and which, under such subjection, leads to death (compare 8 : 13), that is, to hopeless misery in exclusion from the favor of God and in the endurance of his frown and wrath.

25. *I thank God through Jesus*

**our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin.**

*Christ our Lord.* The law gives no hope of deliverance ; but the gospel of Christ, the system of grace through Christ, inspired hope. Through Jesus Christ deliverance can come ; for he bestows the Spirit who imparts a new life and sets up a new dominion in man. || *So then with the mind, etc.* As the result of the preceding view of his sinful and enslaved condition aside from the influence of the Spirit through Jesus Christ, the apostle makes a personal statement : In my mind, that is, my reason and conscience, I acknowledge the goodness and claims of the law of God and my duty to obey it ; but in my flesh, my bodily members, my sensual nature, I obey the law of sin.—The overthrow of this sway of sin, by the new-creating Spirit of God is indispensable to the reign of righteousness in a human being, or to the subjection of the whole man to the dominion of God.

In this chapter the apostle seems to have spoken from his own experience of his sinfulness. At various times in his life, we may well believe, he felt the pressure of the divine law on his conscience, and conviction was awakened that he was not guiltless. His endeavors for a more strict conformity to it, in feeling and conduct, were unsatisfactory ; and notwithstanding all his ceremonial obedience and his general freedom from pain of conscience, he doubtless was dissatisfied with himself at times. Not until he found true and abiding peace through believing in Christ, was he free from conscious servitude to sin. And after this turning point in his religious history, he knew of a conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. Self-acquaintance, no doubt, led him to say to the Galatians, Gal. 5:16, 17, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh ; for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. He nowhere

else enters so much into detail, as here, in regard to the workings of two opposing influences ; but the language throughout this chapter is most naturally explained, as disclosing his own mental exercises. In these he was, doubtless, a specimen of human nature : those who know their own hearts in reference to the law of God have an inward commentary on his language. Remarkably similar to his ideas here is the passage in Galatians, 5: 16, 17, ending with the remark, So that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Universally, the influence of the divine law on the unregenerate spirit fully shows the bondage of such a spirit to sin and the inevitable tendency to spiritual ruin ; and in all, both regenerate and unregenerate, so far as the heart, through any unfavorable circumstances, is not under the influence of the Holy Spirit and of a conscious practical dependence on Christ and the system of free grace, the overpowering influence of sin is felt. To the renewed, as well as the unrenewed, the influences of the system of grace are indispensable for their deliverance from sin and for their spiritual life. In both, the sensual nature, so far as not subordinated to the Spirit of God, is a source of sin, and proves stronger than the preferences and wishes awakened by a view of what is right. Even the apostle felt the necessity of keeping his body under and bringing it into subjection, 1 Cor. 9: 27, lest that after having preached to others he should himself be a castaway.

For illustrating the apostle's description, it is not necessary to resort to grosser forms of sin. While such forms of sin do, indeed, forcibly illustrate it, the workings of a dishonest, and of an ambitious, heart in full view of the demands of God's law furnish, also, ample illustration : our self-love, when not subordinated to the love of God, may easily create

## CHAPTER VIII.

Believers in Christ are delivered from the bondage of sin through the Holy Spirit who abides in them, 1-4. They have an affection for spiritual things, and the promise of a resurrection, 5-11. The obligations, filial privileges, and blissful assurances, connected with the system of grace, 12-39.

### 1 THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after

such a conflict between duty and inclination as is here described: and in those affections, purposes and acts which more directly relate to God, our weakness and vacillation and declining to obey the commands of God, and our thus contracting increased guilt and strengthening the impious sway of sin over us, and our falling deeper and deeper into a sense of present misery, with the prospect of a hopeless doom, are matters of daily occurrence. Those, too, who have the most satisfactory evidence of having been renewed by the Holy Spirit, are fully sensible that their ability to do the will of God is dependent on the Spirit's continued influence.—Compare 1 Cor. 15: 10. Gal. 2: 20.

of freeing himself from condemnation. The way is now thoroughly prepared to resume the consideration of the new system, the scheme of grace: and in the present chapter the apostle affirms that those who accept Christ as their Lord and Head are freed from condemnation; for the dominion, or ruling power of the Holy Spirit imparted to them through Jesus Christ, has liberated them from the enslaving dominion of sin, in order that they might obey the will of God, vs. 1-4. As enjoying the influence of the Holy Spirit, who abides in them, they have a spiritual bent of mind, an affection for spiritual things, and the promise of a resurrection, 5-11. The obligations, growing out of the new relation to God into which the system of grace has brought believers, as being under the influence of the Holy Spirit and as being children of God, together with the blissful assurances which are warranted by the system of grace, are also here presented, 12-39.

In 7: 1-5, the apostle had shown that by the death of Christ the legal system which inevitably brings men into hopeless condemnation, had been terminated in respect to those who connect themselves with Christ as the head of a new arrangement, the system of grace. By virtue of this union with him as their Lord, they are enabled, with the new spirit imparted to them, to live in obedience to God and to glorify him. The treatment of the two questions suggested by the apostle's view of the divine law, namely, Is the law sin? and, Was that which is good made death to me? 7: 7, 13, and which occupied the chief part of the 7th chapter, had brought into very bold relief the utter hopelessness of a sinner's rendering a legal obedience and

1. *There is therefore now no condemnation, etc.* Freedom from condemnation is impossible to men through the law, or the legal system: but Christ has established a system of grace; those, therefore, who are in Christ, that is, who have become united to Christ by faith in him, are no longer under the law, but are under grace. See 6: 14. The law, as a means of justification through obedience, or of condemnation for disobedience, has ceased in respect to them. They now stand on a different ground from that of the law, so that they are

2 the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus  
 3 hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For  
 what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the  
 flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful

beyond the application of its condemnatory sentence. || *Who walk, etc.*; who live not according to the impulses of the carnal nature, of which sin avails itself, but according to the influences of the Holy Spirit who gives a new life to the soul, or imparts power to man's spiritual nature.

2. Being thus in Christ, and under grace, the Holy Spirit, as a sanctifying agent for securing the purposes of the system of grace, influences them with his life-imparting power and delivers them from the dominion of sin.—*The law of the Spirit of life*; the ruling power, or dominion, of the Holy Spirit which imparts spiritual life to the soul and secures eternal life. || *In Christ Jesus*; by Christ Jesus. Compare John 7 : 39, where the bestowal of the Spirit is spoken of as connected with the exaltation of Jesus to glory; also John 16 : 7, etc. The liberation from sin which results from the Spirit's agency is also traceable to Christ, since by him the system of grace was founded and the Spirit sent forth. See John 15 : 26. 16 : 7. || *Hath made me free, etc.*; hath liberated me from the ruling power, or dominion, of sin, which dominion inevitably issues in death, the final misery of a soul rejected of God and abiding under condemnation. Sin had been a ruling power in the soul, making it dead as to any service to God and subjecting it to the death of exclusion from the favor of God and, consequently, from all true bliss. The counteracting dominion of the Spirit had overthrown this sway of sin and given spiritual liberty to the captive. The apostle here uses the personal mode of speech, 'hath made me free,' in harmony with the mode of speaking in the 7th chapter and in order to

make the contrast more striking between the two states in which he conceived of himself as being; namely, as first being under the influence of the law and next under the influence of the system of grace: in both of the views in which he presents himself, he is a specimen of human nature, an illustration of what is naturally to be expected in human beings similarly situated.—It is not necessary to consider the apostle as here affirming respecting himself an entire and final liberation from all influence of sin: he affirmed a liberation from its thralldom, so that it did not bear sway in him, subjecting him to itself. The extent of this liberation, in any case, may be dependent on a variety of circumstances.

3. The ground of this deliverance from the sway of sin is now presented. *For, what the law could not do, in that it was weak, etc.* The legal system was unable to secure obedience from men, so strong and controlling was the carnal disposition in its resistance to the law: but what was impossible to be accomplished through the law, God has effected in another way.—The inability of the law to subdue sin, or to overcome the carnal disposition in man, has been fully illustrated in the 7th chapter. || *God, sending his own Son, etc.* God, having sent his own Son in the flesh, so that he was like man in having that nature which sin had subjected to itself, and having sent him with special reference to sin, has in his person effectually condemned sin: in the very nature over which sin had triumphed, a condemnation of it has been effected and a triumph over it gained. Christ by coming in human nature was, though sinless, like those who had sinned; and the human nature in Christ, that is, *the flesh*, (by having which in com-

4 flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are

mon with man, he was, though sinless, like those who had sinned,) effectually resisted sin, was victorious over it and exposed it as condemned and subjugated.—This condemnation of sin was effected by the overpowering holiness of Christ, through which every temptation to sin was overcome and he obeyed most perfectly the law of God; also, by his sacrificial death, in which while suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, 1 Pet. 3 : 18, he most impressively showed God's condemnation of sin. Thus in human flesh, through which sin had brought about condemnation to men by subjecting them to its sway, in human flesh as borne by Christ in common with man, sin is itself condemned and divested of its power.—|| *And for sin;* either, *with reference to sin*, an expression denoting generally the design for which God sent his Son, namely, that sin might be effectually condemned and its power broken; or, *a sacrifice for sin*, Heb. 10 : 6, 8, 12, denoting specifically his death, which, being endured on account of sin, contained an emphatic condemnation of it and secured the overthrow of its power. || *Condemned sin;* not merely pronounced condemnation on it, for this was done by the law; but effectually condemned it, so that it was brought down to a subjugated state, its dominion was broken, it was exposed as condemned and enfeebled. || *In the flesh;* in human nature, as borne, however, by Christ.—Thus in the person of Christ, and in a nature like sinful man's, God had effected what the law could not do, since carnal inclination was too strong to be effectually withheld by it.

4. This effectual condemnation of sin had for its design, the obedience of Christ's disciples to the precepts of that law, which men's carnal in-

clination will not obey. To the disciples of Christ the Holy Spirit has been imparted: by his influence on them they cease to live in subjection to the flesh. The dominion of the Spirit has broken the dominion of sin, and they now obey the will of God. *The righteousness of the law;* or, the righteous requirement of the law; that is, its collective body of precepts as enjoining the will of God. || *Might be fulfilled;* performed, obeyed. To what extent the law, or will, of God is actually obeyed by believers is not here the object of remark; but the intent, or design, of God to secure complete obedience to his will. Comparatively speaking, that is, as compared with other men and with their former selves, the disciples of Christ obey the will of God; and the tendency of the new spirit which they possess is towards universal and perfect obedience. Among them, and only among them, is obedience to the divine will exemplified on earth. || *In us;* in us individually, and among us collectively. || *Who walk,* etc. See verse 1. Disciples of Christ are here characterized as those in whom the flesh, that is, carnal affection, or inclination, has given way to the Spirit, so that they follow the monitories of the Spirit and have a spiritual tendency of thought and feeling.

5. This spiritual tendency is indispensable to obedience; because carnal affection is towards carnal things, not towards those which the law enjoins; the law being spiritual, requiring the subjection of our spirit to the will of God. The law, then, is in direct opposition to carnal affection, which leads us to seek earthly and personal gratifications, and confines our desires and pursuits to the present world, the region of flesh and

6 after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and  
 7 peace: because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.  
 8 9 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the

sense. *They that are after the flesh do mind*, etc.; they whose temper of mind is carnal, in accordance with sensual and worldly desires, have affection for carnal things merely, and consequently disregard spiritual things, the things which God requires us to love. But in order to have affection for spiritual things and thus obey the will of God, we must have a temper of mind accordant with the Spirit. — In other words, subjection to the *flesh* is utterly inconsistent with obedience to the law of God, since God requires a supreme regard to his will and a decided preference of spiritual things. Carnal men will have affection for carnal things; in order to have affection for spiritual things, men must be spiritual: the Spirit, not the flesh, must be the ruling power.

6. *For to be carnally minded*, etc. Another reason for the necessity of a spiritual dominion in man is, that the natural and inevitable result of being carnally minded, that is, of loving and pursuing carnal things, is *death*, rejection from God's favor and from all bliss; while genuine *life*, living to good purpose for the present and the future, and *peace*, freedom from dread, bliss, both present and anticipated, in possessing God's favor, can come only from being spiritually minded, from loving and pursuing spiritual things.

7. The disastrous result of carnal affection is next accounted for. *The carnal mind*, etc.; literally, according to the original, *the minding of the flesh*; the indulging of carnal affections, is direct hostility to God and makes him hostile to us; of course, it must issue in death to the soul. || *For it is*

*not subject*, etc. The direct hostility of the carnal temper to God and its making him an enemy to us comes from its entire opposition to his law; it is a refusing to submit to him. || *Neither indeed can be*. A carnal disposition cannot, in the very nature of things, be in subjection to the law of God, for it is the direct contrast of that law; it must cease to be a carnal disposition in order to be subject to it. The contrast is the same as between sin and holiness.

8. *They that are in the flesh cannot please God*. They who are ruled by carnal affection cannot please God, because such affection is directly at variance with him; and while they are governed by it, they cannot but offend him. Besides, they are so much under its influence that it sways them even against their judgment and conscience. See 7: 18-23. A new spirit must be possessed by them before they can please God.

9. Freedom from the carnal temper, and ability to please God, depend on the presence and agency of the Spirit of God in the soul. *Ye are not in the flesh*, etc. Ye are not carnal, but spiritual, if indeed, agreeably to your avowal of belonging to Christ, the Spirit of God dwell in you. Compare John 14: 16, 17. 1 Cor. 6: 9-11. || *Now if*; more correctly, *But if*: the contrast of the preceding statement is here made. || *The Spirit of Christ*. The expressions, *Spirit of God* and *Spirit of Christ*, are substantially the same; the Holy Spirit being thus variously denominated as sent forth either by the Father or the Son, and for the purpose of carrying into effect the design of Christ to save men. Compare John 14: 16, 26.

10 Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin ; but the spirit *is* life because 11 of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 THEREFORE, brethren, ye are debtors, not to the flesh, to 13 live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the

15 : 26. 16 : 7. As the apostle was thinking of *believers in Christ* he naturally spoke of the Spirit as being specially the Spirit of Christ ; just as with another shade of thought he might have said, If any man have not the Spirit of God he is none of God's people.

10. Some blissful results of having the Spirit and of being under his influence are next stated. *If Christ be in you*; Christ, by the agency of his Spirit. Compare John 14 : 16, 17, with verse 23. || *The body is dead*, etc. ; the body does, indeed, remain subject to death on account of sin, agreeably to the threatening, Thou shalt surely die, Gen. 2 : 17, and to the doom, Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return, Gen. 3 : 19 ; yet the soul on account of righteousness which, through Christ, has begun to rule in it, has true life towards God and will have eternal life.— Though Christ has procured life for the believer, yet it is the righteous will of God that the believer should, in his body, still be the prey of death. So far as the threat related to the body, it is unreversed ; so far as it related to the soul, it is reversed : true life is given and will endure forever.

11. Still further : Though the bodies of believers must yield to death, yet they too are to be rescued from its power ; their bodies shall be recovered to life by virtue of the Spirit which dwells in believers and which is preparing them for the endless life of heaven. *He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken,*

etc. ; God who raised up the dead body of Christ will also make alive again your mortal bodies *by his Spirit*, that is, by virtue of his Spirit, that dwells in you. Not that the Holy Spirit raises the dead body to life : this act is ascribed to the Son of God ; John 5 : 21, 25, 28 ; but, by virtue of the Spirit's dwelling in believers and rescuing their souls from sin and spiritual death, thus preparing them for heaven, their bodies will also, as an appropriate result, be delivered from the dominion of death.

12-17. The obligations of believers for the bestowal of the Holy Spirit are now hinted, and the glorious state to which the disciples of Christ will be exalted.

12. *Therefore ye are debtors*, etc. ; ye are under obligations, not to the flesh, to live according to its dictates ; but to the Spirit, to live according to his guidance.

13. The sure results of obeying the flesh and of obeying the Spirit enhance this obligation : in the one case, death ; in the other, eternal life. Compare 6 : 23. *If ye—mortify the deeds of the body* ; if ye put to death, that is, resist and subdue, the evil desires of the carnal nature, so that they shall not have power to sway you. Such resistance can be effected only *through the Spirit*.—*Deeds of the body* is an expression of the same import as *works of the flesh* in Gal. 5 : 19-21. Compare also Col. 3 : 5-10. || *Ye shall live* ; ye shall have eternal life. Such resistance to sinful propensities, as is here spoken of, shows also that spiritual life is commenced and such

14 body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit  
 15 of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not re-  
 ceived the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have re-  
 ceived the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.  
 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are  
 17 the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of  
 God and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with  
 him, that we may be also glorified together.

life secures a living sense of the fa-  
 vor of God. Compare Gal. 6 : 7, 8.

14. *For as many as*, etc. The cer-  
 tainty of eternal life to those who,  
 through the Spirit, subdue carnal in-  
 clination, is grounded on the fact that  
 such persons are sons of God. They  
 have a moral likeness to God, being  
 born of the Spirit and led by him.  
 Compare John 1 : 12, 13.

15. *For ye have not received the  
 spirit of bondage again to fear.* Ye  
 were once in bondage to sin ; but the  
 spirit which you have now received  
 is not a servile one, harassing you  
 again with fear of God's condemnation.  
 || *But ye have received the spirit  
 of adoption*, etc. ; the filial spirit, in  
 which we cry out to God, in our  
 prayers, with fervency of affection and  
 filial confidence. || *Abba, Father.*  
 These two words have the same  
 meaning, the former being essen-  
 tially Hebrew. The two-fold form  
 of address to God, as a Father, indi-  
 cates intensity of desire for needed  
 spiritual blessings, coupled with de-  
 light in God and filial trust in him.  
 See Gal. 4 : 6.

16. *The Spirit itself beareth wit-  
 ness*, etc. The Holy Spirit, dwelling  
 in us and exciting childlike feelings  
 towards God, testifies, in union with  
 our own spirit as being conscious of  
 this childlike temper, that we are  
 children of God. A two-fold testi-  
 mony is thus borne to our being chil-  
 dren of God : that of our own con-  
 sciousness of filial feelings towards  
 God, and that of the Holy Spirit who  
 imparted to us, and who still cher-  
 ishes, this temper. The filial temper  
 we had not formerly, but rather, being

in bondage to sin, we habitually dis-  
 obeyed God and felt a dread of his  
 wrath and, consequently, had no filial  
 feelings towards him. The Holy  
 Spirit, who bestows on us the filial  
 temper, also cherishes it, calling forth  
 and directing childlike affections,  
 verse 26, so that at times we cannot  
 but acknowledge an agency superior  
 to our own, by which, in religious  
 affections, we are even carried beyond  
 ourselves : by the Spirit's co-operat-  
 ing with, and strengthening, the filial  
 temper, he may well be considered as  
 bearing a testimony additional to  
 that of the renewed mind.

17. The blissful consequences of  
 the filial relation to God are suggested.  
*If children, then heirs.* A child is also  
 an heir, and, as such, is to share in  
 his father's wealth. So with children  
 of God ; they are heirs of God, Gal.  
 4 : 7 ; God designs to bestow on  
 them a possession hereafter, suitable  
 to his and their mutual relation.  
 The inexhaustible resources of the  
 divine bounty will most amply pro-  
 vide for them. || *Joint-heirs with  
 Christ*, etc. As they are in Christ,  
 intimately united to him, belonging  
 to him as his redeemed people, mem-  
 bers of his body, Eph. 5 : 30, they  
 are to be his fellow-heirs ; in order  
 that, since they suffer with him and  
 for his sake, they may also be glori-  
 fied together with him, participating  
 in his glory as well as in his suffer-  
 ings.—The whole life of Christ on  
 earth was a continued humiliation ;  
 he endured temptations from the evil  
 One, and from men contumely and  
 rejection : without earthly resources,  
 he was dependent on the bounty of

18 FOR I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time *are*

others ; during his closing days he underwent incomparable sufferings till he expired, in anguish and ignominy, on the cross. His people have often been called to bitter sufferings in consequence of being his disciples and of steadfastly adhering to his cause ; they have been hated, reviled, persecuted even unto death. The apostle had large experience of suffering for the sake of Christ ; 2 Cor. 1 : 8, 9. 4 : 8-10. 6 : 4, 5. 11 : 23-27. 12 : 10. Col. 1 : 24. But the issue will make amends for all sufferings endured in his cause ; for the design of God is, that his disciples shall be *also glorified together with him*. In his glory, they are to participate. He has been their suffering Head ; he is now their glorified Head : they have been his suffering members ; they are to be his glorified members. Great and unspeakable as is the glory awarded to Christ, his disciples are to share in it. See John 17 : 22-24. Compare 1 Pet. 4 : 13. Rev. 3 : 21.

18-23. The thought of the glory which is in reserve for the people of Christ, as being children of God, brings fully before the apostle's mind the consummation of God's purposes in respect to the kingdom of Christ and the corresponding renovation of all things. So great will be the glory to which the children of God will then be elevated, that all present sufferings can bear no comparison with it. So desirable is their entrance on the expected glory, that the whole creation is conceived of as anticipating it with eagerness, hoping that then the suffering and perishable state to which it has been subjected will be succeeded by one of freedom from frailty and mortality ; a state of the natural creation corresponding to that which the glorified children of God will enjoy. As the sinfulness of men is now accompanied with misery on the part of all sentient

beings in the world, so the future glory of Christ's people, when entered on by them as redeemed from sin, is to introduce a new order of things, from which decay and mortality will be excluded, and in which permanent bliss will be enjoyed. The apostle and his fellow Christians, having by the presence of the Spirit in their hearts the commencement of spiritual and eternal bliss, were also themselves waiting with earnest desire for its consummation in the expected glory.

The passage is highly figurative. Nature, or the whole creation, is personified, and is represented as conscious of having been subjected to a frail and unsatisfying state, to misery and death, yet with hope of recovery from that state and of a permanently happy condition at the period when the designs of redeeming mercy should be accomplished in the entrance of Christ's people on their final glory. The general idea of the termination of frailty and corruptibility is conveyed ; but precisely in what particulars this new state of things will consist we are not informed, and it is useless to speculate on the subject. The glowing description in this passage is summarily given by the apostle Peter when he speaks, 2 Pet. 3 : 13, of "new heavens and a new earth :" a resemblance to it we have, also, in the 21st chapter of Revelation. The expectation of a renovated state of things, in which even the inferior creation should share, originated, probably, in such predictions as we find in Is. 11 : 6-9. 65 : 17-25. That state however, denominated the new heavens and the new earth, being so different from the one with which we are now familiar, all speculations about it and attempts at minute explanation must prove failures : but that the present is to pass away and to be succeeded by one of unspeakable glory to the redeemed people of Christ, and of

not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of

wide-spreading influence and connections beyond our definite knowledge, seems, evidently, the teaching of the scriptures. In harmony with the language of this paragraph we may say, in the language of one of our hymns, all "nature sighs to be renewed," and is awaiting the period when the redeemed shall enter on their promised glory; for then frailty and mortality will have ceased, and all things will have become new. The idea is also a familiar one in the Old Testament, that under the reign of the Messiah the earth would become vastly improved in fruitfulness and beauty. See Is. 35 : 1. 29 : 17. 32 : 15, 16. 18. *For I reckon that the sufferings, etc.* The apostle was animated with the thought of the glory with Christ, which was to succeed the sufferings that he and his fellow-Christians were called to endure. He may be considered as saying, We may well bear patiently the sufferings, since they are to be followed by such glory; for I judge that our present sufferings are not worthy to be named in comparison with the glory that is to be revealed in respect to us. Compare 2 Cor. 4 : 17.

19. *The earnest expectation.* The word here used in the original is indicative of that eagerness which is shown by a person looking off to something with his head bent forward. || *Of the creature;* more correctly, *the creation*, as personified: the sentient irrational creation is figuratively regarded as endowed with rational powers and, while exposed to abuse, suffering and death, as longing for that signal event which will put an end to its misery. As other

instances of this figure, see Jer. 12 : 4. Is. 35 : 1. || *The manifestation of the sons of God;* the revelation of the glory of the sons of God, mentioned in the preceding verse; the word here translated *manifestation* being radically the same as that translated *revealed*. The period is meant when the expected glory shall be ushered in, and when it may also be said that the sons of God are manifested, or rendered conspicuous, as such. Compare 1 John 3 : 2.

20, 21. This manifestation, or revelation, is waited for with eager interest by the creation, since the creation is to experience a corresponding transformation.—*For the creature;* more correctly, *the creation*. || *Was made subject to vanity.* The creation was subjected to a frail, perishable state, as if made in vain, so far as any enduring valuable purpose is concerned. || *Not willingly, but by reason of him, etc.* The figure is still retained, which ascribes intelligence and choice to the creation. This subjection was not of the creation's choice, but of the sovereign appointment of God. Compare Gen. 3 : 17, Cursed is the ground for thy sake. || *In hope.* These words ought, agreeably to the punctuation in the best editions of the Greek Testament, to be connected with the words *made subject to vanity* in the first clause of the verse, as indicating the hope, held out to the creation, of deliverance from this state of frailty and transiency; though the creation was thus subjected, yet hope was given it that a different state of things was in reserve.—The words *the same*, in Italics, as supplied by the translators, should

22 God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and  
 23 travaileth in pain together until now : and not only *they*, but  
 ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even  
 we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adop-  
 24 tion, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. For we are saved  
 by hope. But hope that is seen, is not hope : for what a  
 25 man seeth, why doth he yet hope for ? But if we hope for  
 26 that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*. Like-  
 wise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not

be omitted, and the word *it* take their place.—In the 21st verse, the word *because* should be substituted by the word *that*, which word should not be separated from the word *hope*. The apostle's language in these two verses, in harmony with the suggestion just made, would be better rendered in the following manner :—For the creation was subjected to vanity (not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it), in hope that the creation itself shall be set free from the bondage of the corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. *The bondage of the corruption* is the same as the *involuntary subjection to vanity*, *corruption* being significant of that which *is to decay and perish*, and being virtually a *bondage*. *The liberty, or freedom, of the glory of the children of God* means *liberty from that bondage*, which liberty stands connected with the glory to be possessed by the children of God.

22. *The whole creation groaneth*, etc.; the whole creation has, up to this time, been enduring bitter anguish. The liabilities of the lower creation to suffering seem to be here meant; while we cannot but also think of the mental and bodily miseries which have so perpetually harassed mankind.

23. *Not only they, but ourselves also*, etc.; not only the creation in general is thus in misery and longs for deliverance from it, but *we* too, that is, the apostle himself and his fellow Christians, who have the Holy Spirit as the earnest of the heavenly glory,

are weighed down with a sense of present dissatisfaction and are sighing for the completed adoption, the deliverance of our bodies from the power of death and an entrance on the full possession of our inheritance, the state of glory. Compare verses 11, 17. || *The first-fruits of the Spirit*. The first-fruits are an earnest of the coming harvest ; so the influences of the Holy Spirit, imparting the spirit of adoption, verse 14, are the earnest of the future glory, for which they are preparing the children of God by strengthening their filial affection for him and maturing their conformity to his own Son. || *Waiting for the adoption*; the full enjoyment of the blessings of sonship, the adoption completed. || *The redemption of our body*; the deliverance of the body from the power of death by the resurrection. See verse 11. This event, still waited for, is here regarded as the last of the preliminaries to the entrance of the sons of God on the full possession of their glory.

24, 25. This completed adoption is *waited for*; it is still an object of hope. *We are saved by hope*; more properly, *in hope*. Salvation is not yet realized ; it is an object of hope. We have the *promise* of salvation, the actual and complete possession of it being in reserve. || *Hope that is seen*, etc. Hope ceases as soon as its object is really a matter of sight and possession ; but while the desired object is not yet possessed, we continue, through patience, waiting for it.

26. Not only does our hope of

what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to *the will of God*.

28 AND we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his purpose*. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom

salvation encourage a patient waiting for it, but the Spirit, in like manner, aids us in our weakness. *Our infirmities* ; our weakness through ignorance, error and sin. || *For we know not*, etc. We need aid in our prayers ; since through ignorance we might pray for improper objects, and through dulness of spiritual apprehension and affection we might not pray with the requisite confidence and earnestness. But the Spirit himself acts in our behalf and excites within us intense desires for spiritual blessings, felt but incapable of expression. These ardent desires for spiritual good and fitness for heaven are here regarded as the entreaties of the Holy Spirit himself in our behalf, since it is he that awakens them and feeds the flame of piety. || *Groanings which cannot be uttered* : unutterable sighings for spiritual blessings. These are, indeed, the actings of our own souls, but prompted by the Spirit, and accepted as expressions of the Spirit's desires in our behalf. — The more intense our genuine desires for spiritual good, the less capable are they of being adequately expressed in language.

27. *He that searcheth the hearts*, etc. God, the searcher of hearts, knows our unexpressed desires and will grant them, since in them he sees the intent of the Holy Spirit in respect to us ; and the Spirit's entreaties are in accordance with the will of God. || *For the saints* ; the

people of Christ : so called, as being really and professedly holy persons, consecrated to God ; the counterpart of the Jews, the ancient people of God, who as a nation were called *saints*, or *holy*, since they were separated from all other nations and taken into a peculiar relation to God. See on 1 : 7. — The Spirit in our hearts awakens no desires and prompts no prayers but such as the heart-searching God fully apprehends, and such as the prayer-hearing God will acknowledge as being accordant with his will. How harmonious in all their parts are the arrangements for our salvation ! and what encouragement we have patiently to wait for it !

28. In addition to patience in hoping for salvation, and to the special aid of the Spirit in our prayers, we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, those whom he has also called to the blessings and glory of the divine kingdom. — *For good* ; for their highest good, the good result of heavenly glory. In the divine administration, all things will either directly conduce, or be overruled, to this result. || *Who are the called* ; not merely invited, but so called that they have accepted the invitation. See on 1 : 7. || *According to his purpose* ; according to the purpose of making them partakers of glory with Christ. 29, 30. The apostle proceeds to disclose the ground of the certainty

he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them  
31 he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things ?

that all things co-operate for good to the people of Christ. In doing this, he commences with the fact that God *foreknew* them as those who were included in his purpose ; then, that he had *fore-appointed* them to become partakers of a moral resemblance to his own Son ; being thus fore-appointed, he *called*, or invited, them to the proposed blessings, which call had effect, so that they became believers in his Son ; being thus called, he *justified* them, regarded and treated them as righteous on the ground of their being united to his Son by faith in him ; and those thus justified he *glorified*. The last step is here mentioned, like the others, as already taken, though it is an anticipation of what is to be realized in heaven. The apostle was here conceiving of the entire Christian body as contemplated in the divine purpose ; and therefore regarded the event as certain, like the preceding steps which led to it. With ardor of mind, throwing himself forward to the era of the final accomplishment, he seems rather describing what has taken place than what is yet future. The *calling* and the *justifying* are also future and successive, in reference to the individuals included in the divine purpose. Though to man the divine purpose divides itself into parts, successively realized, yet to God the purpose was always present as including all the parts : God's omniscient survey contemplates all these at once, while to man they appear only in the process of being effected and are successive both in respect to individuals and to generations.—*Foreknow* ; know beforehand, as those whom he had purposed to save : reference being, doubtless, had to God's knowledge as connected with his eternal purposes. Compare 1 Pet. 1 : 20, where the word *fore-ordained* is the translation of a word radically the same as the

one here used in the original. || *Predestinate* ; appoint, or determine, beforehand. The same word is here used in the original as is translated *determined before* in Acts 4 : 28, and *ordained* in 1 Cor. 2 : 7. || *To be conformed to the image of his Son*, etc. ; to the likeness of his own Son, in reference to their affections and purposes, or their character : in this respect it was fore-appointed that they should become like him. Thus, he being God's own Son, and they, renewed in spirit and united to him by faith, being adopted as children of God, he would be the first-born of the spiritual brotherhood, that is, the Head of it ; for in oriental families the first-born son occupied the place of honor and power, or lordship, in reference to the other children.—The purpose of God, then, contemplated holiness of character as indispensable to its ultimate result : unless we are, morally, like Christ, we have not evidence that we belong to the company whom he acknowledges as his brethren. Mistake on this point is also forestalled by the apostle's idea, that it is those who *love God* that were the objects of his purpose and pre-determination. || *Many brethren*. The redeemed will be an innumerable multitude out of every nation and kindred. See Rev. 5 : 9. 7 : 9. || *Called*. The connection shows that the *calling* involves the idea of a corresponding *acceptance* on the part of the called. || *Justified* ; treated as righteous through their believing in Christ. || *Glorified* ; admitted to glory : or, more coolly speaking, he regarded them as heirs of glory, as those who were to be glorified with Christ. Compare verse 17.

31. In view of these things, what shall we say ? Is there the slightest ground for doubt as to our participation of glory with Christ, in whom we believe and whom we are follow-

32 If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died: yea rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ing on earth? If God be for us, etc. aid. Who is it, then, that can condemn us?

32. *He that spared not his own Son.* Since God has not withheld the greatest possible gift, his own Son, what things are too great for him to bestow? All things else are small, compared with this; having given us this, the greatest, will he withhold the less? Especially will he bestow all things which are needful for accomplishing the object of this greatest gift.

33. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Who shall bring an accusation against those whom God has chosen and who are objects of his special favor? It is God, who has acquitted them of every charge and accepted them. Who, then, can revive a charge against them, or prefer a new accusation? Who can reverse God's decision concerning them?

34. *Who is he that condemneth?* Who can undertake to condemn us? Christ has died for us; yea, rather, has been raised from the dead for us; has been exalted to the right hand of God, and is there our patron and advocate, entreating for us favor and

35, 36. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* That is, from the love which Christ cherishes for us. What shall induce him to cease loving us? Shall affliction, in all the diversified forms in which it may assail us, be allowed to gain power over us so as to make us deny Christ, and thus induce him to separate himself from us and cut us off from his love? || *Nakedness;* a comparative word, meaning destitution of suitable apparel. || *Sword.* The sword, an instrument of death, here signifies exposure to violent death. The apostle was reminded of a passage in the Old Testament, Ps. 44: 22, expressive of exposure to murderous enemies, and which was but too applicable to himself and many of the early followers of Christ.

37. *Nay,* etc. Far from it. So far from these things terminating in Christ's withdrawal of his love from us, it is HE that carries us triumphantly through the conflict.

38, 39. The apostle concludes his animating view by avowing his conviction that absolutely nothing, not

## CHAPTER IX.

Rejection of the Jewish people from the favor of God, regretted, 1-5. Their rejection resulting, not from failure on the part of God to fulfil his word, but from his discriminating between his professed and his real people, 6-12. Objection against the justice of making this discrimination, considered, 14-18. Objection against the justice of imputing blame, considered, 19-29. Gentiles, obtaining righteousness through faith in Christ; Jews, through refusing to believe in Christ, failing to obtain righteousness, 30-33.

the most various and opposite influences, shall be able to separate genuine believers from the love which God has for them and which he has manifested in Christ Jesus their Lord. This love will be abiding, and its design in their behalf will certainly be accomplished.—*Neither death*, with whatever dread it may be anticipated, or with whatever terrors it may be connected; *nor life*, with all its allurements; *nor angels*, *nor principalities*, *nor powers*, that is, nor any superhuman powers. Compare 1 Cor. 15: 24. Eph. 1: 21. 3: 10. 6: 12. Col. 1: 16. 2: 15. *Nor things present*, whether agreeable or painful, *nor things to come*, whether desirable or dreadful; *nor height*, *nor depth*, nothing on high, in heaven, or the upper air, the visible heavens where evil spirits were popularly thought often to be, Eph. 2: 2. 6: 12, and nothing below, on earth, or under the earth; (compare Is. 7: 11, where *earth* and *heaven* seem to be meant by *depth* and *height*;) *nor any other creature*, nor any created thing. In short, nothing at all shall prevail to remove from us God's loving-kindness; it will abide, and will secure for us the end which he has purposed to bestow, namely, participation in the glory of Christ in heaven.

Such is the result to which the apostle brings his reasoning on the topics of the believer's justification and sanctification by the death of Christ and the renovating agency of the Holy Spirit. In the last two verses, the ardor of his mind must be kept in view when we are seeking to

interpret his language. He accumulates various particulars, some of them entire contrasts, some of them capable of being applied to beings and things that might seem in themselves helpful to Christians rather than hostile to them; but by such an accumulation he brings out more fully, than he otherwise could, his deep conviction of the certainty of a glorious issue to the believer in Christ.

## CHAPTERS IX—XI.

Another section of the epistle commences at this point and occupies three chapters. The doctrine of the gospel, as unfolded in this epistle, was entirely repugnant to the sentiments of Jews in general. They had been in the habit of regarding themselves as the people of God, by virtue of his promises to the patriarchs and of their own observance of the Mosaic law: they held the observance of this law as a claim for acceptance with God. The apostle regarded such a claim as futile: acceptance with God, he taught, is to be obtained by becoming disciples of Christ and trusting in him. This utter opposition of cherished Jewish ideas to the Christian doctrine made the mass of the nation reject the gospel and exclude themselves from its benefits. The apostle could not but commiserate them. Their rejection from being the people of God needed, in view of the ancient promises of God, to be explained and vindicated. To this subject the three following chapters are devoted.

1 I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also

### CHAPTER IX.

The apostle first expresses his deep regret at the reverse which had taken place in the Jewish nation; formerly, so honored of God and favored with rich promises; now, cast off and having no portion in the Messiah. Vs. 1-5.

Having expressed his grief, he next undertakes to explain this deplorable fact. Some might hastily conclude, that God had failed to fulfil his word. Paul repels that idea; but, resorting to the absolute purposes of God, affirms that God did not make his promise to the entire nation: God discriminated between the nation and those who were, or were to be, his real people; just as he discriminated, among the descendants of Abraham, between Isaac, the promised child, and the other children; and as he made a distinction between the children of Rebecca, namely Esau and Jacob, even before they were born. Vs. 6-13.

Some might object that in making such discrimination according to an absolute purpose, God was unjust. The apostle repels this suggestion by an appeal to the Jewish scriptures, the authority and sacredness of which Jews would acknowledge. In the Old Testament, God claims to exercise his mercy on whom he will, thus selecting objects for his mercy, making distinctions in the bestowal of it, and not allowing it to rest on any meritorious ground, such, for instance, as that of a person's desiring it, or toiling for it so as to deserve it, but purely on the ground of God's being disposed to be merciful. So, on the other hand, if mercy be withheld and a man's heart become hardened, the Old Testament traces this result to God. A person, then, who regarded the Old Testament as an authority, could not consistently reject the thought that God made discrimination among the Jews, showing

mercy to some and hardening others. Vs. 14-18.

The objector might then say, Why does he then blame us? for in any event his will is done; no one has effectually opposed it.—The apostle regards this as the language of impiety. He suggests two replies to it: first, God has a right to do as he pleases with his creatures, designing them respectively for honor or for dishonor; secondly, In bringing about the result of his purpose, he awards men to an issue for which they have become fitted, whether, as objects of his displeasure, for destruction, or, as objects of his favor, for glory. This is true of men, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, as Gentiles and Jews were both found among Christians. The apostle here quotes, in illustration of his views, a passage from the prophet Hosea which represents God as, of his mere good pleasure, taking into a relation of favor with himself those who had not hitherto been thus regarded, a thought applicable to *Gentiles*, and from the prophet Isaiah language which showed that a vast number of *Jews* would be cast off. Vs. 19-29.

It accords with these views, then, that Gentiles, who had not been pursuing after righteousness, had yet obtained righteousness, namely, that which comes from believing in Christ; and that Jews, who had been pursuing after righteousness had not obtained it, because they sought it not from faith in Christ, but from adhering to the Mosaic law. Vs. 30-33.

The cause of the Jews' exclusion from the favor of God and from being his people is, thus, clearly shown; namely, their refusing to believe in Christ.

1 *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not*, etc.; a solemn avowal of the apostle's sincerity in the affirmation he was about to make. He spoke as one united to Christ and resting all his

2 bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great  
 3 heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could  
 wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren,  
 4 my kinsmen according to the flesh : who are Israelites : to  
 whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the cove-

hopes of spiritual good on him, fearing that, if he should make a false declaration, his conduct would be a forfeiting of his relationship to Christ. He spoke, also, as one under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and having the testimony of his own conscience that he was about to utter only the truth.

2. *That I have great heaviness*, etc. The ground of his sorrow, namely, God's rejection of the Jewish people, he does not formally state, perhaps, through delicacy towards the Jews ; but it would be easily conjectured and would soon appear.

3. *For I could wish*, etc. Under his intensity of emotion in view of the hopeless reverse to which the Jews were subjecting themselves, he expresses a willingness to endure any conceivable misery, however extreme, even to being himself sundered from Christ and devoted to destruction, were it possible thereby to save them from their doom. — This passage is not to be regarded as proceeding from a cool, calculating mind, but as the language of emotion, showing the deep hold which the welfare of his countrymen had on his heart and how little he ought to be suspected of indifference towards them. His willingness to meet such suffering must also be understood as conditioned on the possibility of its being so appointed, and of its being available for the purpose contemplated. It should be compared with expressions of solicitude and compassion which are sometimes made in reference to an endeared object ; as when we say, We would gladly have done *any thing*, or endured *any thing*, to avert its misery : as David said, 2 Sam. 18 : 33, Would God I had died for thee, O

Absalom, my son, my son ; that is, provided my dying could have saved thy life ; as Moses said, Ex. 32 : 32, Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written ; that is, provided that thus the people might be saved.—The original word, translated *I could wish*, may be compared with similar words in the original, as to their grammatical form, in Acts 25 : 22, Gal. 4 : 20. || *Accursed from Christ*. The word *anathema*, here used in the original, signifies something which has been devoted to destruction and which could not be redeemed. Compare Lev. 27 : 28, 29. The corresponding Hebrew term was also employed in such cases as those of the ancient cities of Palestine, and of various objects, taken as spoils of war, that were to be destroyed. See Josh. 6 : 17, 18. 7 : 1, 11. To be an *anathema, accursed*, was, *to be given up to destruction*. In the earnest expression of his grief, then, the apostle declares himself ready, in behalf of his national kindred, to endure the very worst conceivable form of misery, even a separation from Christ and meeting the doom of an accursed object, could such an arrangement avail to the salvation of his countrymen. In such emotion, he would naturally name something beyond possibility ; since any thing within his reach, any thing really feasible, could not fathom the depth of his grief at their loss of the inconceivable good of the Messiah's kingdom. || *For my brethren*, etc.; in behalf of my brethren, the Jews, my kinsmen as to national descent and national relation.

4. The apostle proceeds to mention the chief points by which the

nants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and  
 5 the promises ; whose *are* the fathers, and of whom, as con-  
 cerning the flesh, Christ *came* ; WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD  
 BLESSED FOREVER ! Amen.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.

Jewish nation had been pre-eminently distinguished, and reflection on which could not but stimulate interest in their welfare.—*Who are Israelites.* They bore the honorable name of Israelites (compare 2 Cor. 11 : 22), as descended from the patriarch to whom the appellation *Israel* was given by the angel of God, Gen. 32 : 24–28, as an indication of divine favor towards him. || *To whom pertaineth the adoption* ; more exactly, *whose was the adoption.* The adoption here spoken of is not the spiritual adoption, mentioned in 8 : 15–17, but the national, by which the Hebrews were honored in being selected from all other nations to be the people, or children, of God. See Deut. 14 : 1. 32 : 6. || *The glory* ; the visible manifestation of Jehovah's presence in the tabernacle and temple. See Ex. 40 : 34, 35. 1 Kgs. 8 : 10, 11. 2 Chron. 7 : 1. Compare also Ex. 24 : 16, 17. || *The covenants* ; those made with Abraham, Jacob, and the whole people. || *The giving of the law* ; the code, or system, of laws expressly given from heaven through Moses. || *The service of God* ; the divinely appointed worship. || *The promises* ; particularly those pertaining to the coming and the reign of the Messiah.

5. *Whose are the fathers* ; the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other honored progenitors of the Jewish nation. || *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.* As to his fleshly, human, descent, the Messiah, in whom the glory and hopes of the nation and of the world centred, was of the Jewish people.—He possessed, however, a higher nature than the human, in which he was in no respect connected, for his existence, with any created being. This divine nature is

immediately brought to our notice in contrast with the human. || *Who is God.* The mention of the human descent of Christ, in such a connection as this, where the privileges and glory of the Jewish nation are exhibited, naturally led to a declaration of his divine nature and of the apostle's feelings of adoration towards him. For a similar mention of his divine nature, see 1 : 4. John 1 : 1. 1 Tim. 3 : 16. || *Over all* ; over all men without distinction of nations as being Gentiles or Jews, and over all things. See Matt. 28 : 18. Acts 10 : 36. Eph. 1 : 22. Heb. 1 : 2. 1 Pet. 3 : 22. || *Blessed forever* ; worthy to be praised forever.—The words, *who is over all, God blessed forever*, have been variously interpreted. The principal of these diverse modes of treating them is that which regards them as, in the original, not referring to Christ, but as a doxology addressed to God. The objections, however, against this view are so strong that it is best to understand the words as relating directly to Christ.

6. Having so fecklessly avowed his sorrow, the apostle proceeds to account for the sad event of the Jews' rejection. Some might regard it as a failure, on the part of God, to fulfil his promise to the seed of Abraham. Such a view, however, the apostle affirms, is not correct : for God's promise had respect not to all the Jews, but to a certain portion of them whom in his own free purpose he had designed to bless. To that portion, originally had in view, the promise had been, or would be, fulfilled. The promise was made to the *Israelites* ; but not all who have descended from Israel are acknowledged as true Israelites : the promise was made to the

7 For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children : but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called : that is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God ; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only *this*;

*children of Abraham*; but not all the descendants of Abraham are acknowledged as his true children : just as in a national point of view, it was only the descendants of Abraham through *Isaac* that were regarded as Abraham's children.—*Not as though the word of God*, etc. The case is not as though the declaration of God, or his word of promise, had failed : we are not to reason on any such ground. || *For they are not all Israel*, etc.; for not all who are descendants of Israel are the true Israel, Israelites in the sight of God.

7. *Neither because they are the seed of Abraham*, etc. Not because they are natural descendants of Abraham, are they his true children, having part in the promises made to him. || *But, in Isaac*, etc. Though Abraham had other sons, yet only his descendants through Isaac were to be accounted his posterity. See Gen. 21: 12.—The same thing is observable in regard to the possession of spiritual blessings, as held true in regard to being accounted the posterity of Abraham. It was only the descendants through Isaac that were to be regarded as his seed, while the descendants through Ishmael were not accounted his posterity in reference to the blessings which were promised to Abraham; those descendants were not included in the divine promises. As a distinction was made among the immediate descendants of Abraham, and only a certain portion were included within the promises, so, in regard to the nation, a distinction was made. It was not the natural relation to Abraham that was the ground of receiving the blessings of the Mes-

siah: not the descendants of Abraham, *as such*, were to inherit the promises; fleshly claims did not hold here, and blessings were bestowed on a different principle. The particular principle which the apostle had in mind is presented in the following verse.

8. *That is*, etc. The apostle regards the promise which he had just quoted, Gen. 21: 12, as containing the idea, that not those who are descended from Abraham by natural birth are acknowledged as children of God, but those to whom the promise of God particularly related, and who are therefore denominated *children of the promise*. The true children of God are not those persons who trace their natural descent to Abraham, but those who were the objects of God's promise, or, agreeably to verse 11, objects of God's purpose. Sonship with God is not a result of fleshly descent, but of God's promise, or purpose.

9. *For this is the word of promise*, etc. This verse contains the proof that only those are regarded as children of God, in respect to whom a promise had been made; just as only Isaac, of all the sons of Abraham, was regarded as his true child, or heir, in consequence of his being born by virtue of a divine promise.—The promise, as here cited, is not a verbal, but a free, quotation, according to the sense, from Gen. 18: 10.

10-13. *And not only this; but*, etc. Rebecca also is a case in point.—As further illustrating the bestowal of blessings in accordance with a divine promise, or purpose, aside from the circumstance of birth, the apostle

but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our  
 11 father Isaac, (for *the children* being not yet born, neither hav-  
 ing done any good or evil, that the purpose of God accord-  
 ing to election might stand, not of works, but of him that  
 12 calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the  
 13 younger: as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have  
 I hated

adduces the case of Rebecca, the mother of Esau and Jacob. Concerning her two sons respectively, God had declared his purpose even before they were born and when, moreover, that purpose could not be influenced by either good desert or ill desert on their part; and thus the superior privileges and blessings of Jacob must be traced to a divine purpose or promise, not to the circumstance of descent from Abraham, nor to a claim founded on meritorious obedience. God discriminated, in his purpose, between these two sons, giving one pre-eminence over the other, and giving the pre-eminence to that one who, on the principle of domestic relations acknowledged at that time, could not have expected it.

11. *That the purpose of God according to election might stand;* according to his own spontaneous choice between those two sons of Rebecca; a choice, originating in his own mind, not influenced by anything extraneous to himself. || *Not of works;* originating, not from any works performed, or obedience rendered. This choice was not a result of deeds on the part of the children, either good deeds or evil, and therefore not a result of desert, but a result of God's own calling and appointment. — A universal principle as to the freeness of God's choice seems here involved: this choice rests not at all on good desert, either present, or future as foreseen.

12. *It was said unto her, etc.* See Gen. 25: 28. It was the rule in oriental families that the first-born son should have authority over the others; but in the case of Esau and Jacob, God saw fit to disregard the

rule and to purpose that the older should be in subjection to the younger, thus making an unexpected discrimination as to superiority. This case illustrated not only the limitation of blessings to one in preference to another of Abraham's descendants, but also an antecedent choice of the former, according to a divine purpose as the ground of this limitation.—The passage quoted had reference originally to the posterity of Esau and Jacob, though it doubtless applied also to the two brothers personally; and in either case, it equally answered the apostle's design; since the relative position of the two brothers, and of the people descended from them, was a result of the divine pre-arrangement. The idea of the elder being a servant to the younger had reference to the inferior position, to which Esau was reduced by his loss of his father's blessing and of the right of primogeniture, and by his being separated from the family which enjoyed a special relation to God.—In reference to the descendants of the two brothers, the Old Testament proves the fulfilment of the divine purpose in the repeated subjection of the Edomites, descendants of Esau, to the Hebrews. See 1 Sam. 14: 47. 2 Sam. 8: 14. 1 Chron. 18: 11–13. 1 Kgs. 11: 15.

13. *As it is written, etc.* In harmony with the view just given of a discrimination, in the purpose of God, between Esau and Jacob, we find it written in Mal. 1: 2, 3, I loved Jacob and I hated Esau.—The subsequent treatment of these individuals and of their posterity was in harmony with the declaration made before their birth; Jacob and his descendants

14 WHAT shall we say then? *is there* unrighteousness with  
 15 God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have  
 mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compas-  
 16 sion on whom I will have compassion. So then, *it is* not of  
 him that willeth, nor him that runneth, but of God that

were favored of God, while Esau and his descendants were comparatively neglected: God, according to his own purpose, in the one case, bestowed favor, in the other he did not. — In the quotation from Malachi, the two nations, the Hebrews and the Edomites, are spoken of; but the apostle easily associated the nations respectively with their progenitors, and may be considered as directing attention to the resemblance between historical events in the two nations and the original prediction. — The word *hated* is here to be understood comparatively, as in Luke 14: 26; and it indicates the comparative lack of favor towards Esau. — Throughout this paragraph, vs. 8–13, the apostle evidently traces back human affairs to the pre-determining will of God, and to his providential administration as corresponding with that will. This recognition of the sovereign purpose and agency of God is frequent with Paul. Compare 2 Cor. 5: 18. Eph. 1: 11. 2: 8, 9. 2 Tim. 1: 8, 9.

14. *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness, etc.* If God, in his treatment of men, discriminate between them according to an original purpose of his own, what shall we say to this? Is he unrighteous in so doing? — The apostle, foretelling the thought that thereby the justice of God might be impugned, himself proposes the inquiry, whether there be injustice in God's treating men according to his own original spontaneous purpose in regard to them. || *God forbid;* be it not so: let not such a thought be indulged.

15. *For he saith to Moses.* The apostle now repels the idea that there can be injustice on the part of God. In order to perceive the force of his

reply, we must keep in mind the actual case which he is considering; namely, the rejection of the Jews. He is not to be regarded as discussing, in a philosophical manner, an abstract question concerning the government of God, but an actual case and in a manner adapted to the Jewish mind. The Jews held the Old Testament in reverence as the word of God; and if it should appear that God had claimed, in his word, the right of discriminating between men according to his own sovereign will and purpose, the supposition of unrighteousness in him must, by Jews, be abandoned. This claim, together with corresponding conduct, on the part of God, is clearly maintained in the Old Testament. This appeal to the word of God is of two parts; the first, in reference to the bestowal of mercy: the second, in respect to the award of vengeance. In a declaration to Moses, Ex. 33: 19, God claims the right to show mercy on whosoever he will, having supreme regard to his own good pleasure.

16. *So then, etc.* From the declaration of God just quoted, it follows that the bestowal of his mercy is to be traced to his own will or choice, and not to a person's own desire, or strenuous efforts to deserve it. || *It is not of him that willeth;* the mercy of God is not result of a person's own will, or desire for it, as the originating, or procuring, cause. || *Nor of him that runneth.* Allusion is here had to the races in which men contended for prizes, 1 Cor. 9: 24; the prize was awarded, as a matter of merit, to the successful racer. Not so in regard to the mercy of God: it is not bestowed as a compensation for service, or for efforts, as if man could

17 sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh ;  
 Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I  
 might show my power in thee, and that my name might be  
 18 declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy  
 on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

obtain a claim to it, as he can for an earthly prize, which is awarded on the ground of the successful competitor's deserving it. — The apostle is here contemplating *the source* of blessings : he traces them back to the divine will ; he does not deny the necessity, nor disparage the duty, of desires and efforts for blessings. Nothing is more evident, both from the word of God and from universal experience, than that sincere and earnest seeking for blessings is requisite in order to their bestowal : he that *asketh* receiveth ; he that *seeketh* findeth ; to him that *knocketh* it shall be opened. But the apostle here denies the meritorious character of such desires and efforts, as if they could constitute a claim for the blessings. Not to man's desert, but to God's will and unmerited mercy, must blessings be traced.

The apostle viewed the plan of God in redemption as comprehending the entire human family, not merely Jews ; and the divine purpose of forming subjects for the spiritual kingdom, of which the Messiah was to be the head, was by no means limited to the Jewish people. He also viewed God as acting from the first, when he selected Abraham and the Jewish nation, with reference to that kingdom in its completed state. In explaining the divine dealings with the Jews, therefore, he resorts to that governing purpose of God, by which God selects and fits subjects of his kingdom, not according to natural descent, not according to men's original will, nor according to efforts which men might make for a meritorious claim for blessings, but wholly according to mercy on his part, so that his grace, and not human merit,

should be honored. This was the apostle's habitual view: in opposition to national descent and to human merit even of the slightest degree, in reference both to Jews and to all men, he perpetually insisted that God saves us and calls us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, 2 Tim. 1: 9 ; and that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saves us. Tit. 3 : 5.

17. *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh.* Still further, and with reference particularly to that part of the nation which was excluded from the blessings of the gospel, a scripture testimony is adduced, Ex. 9 : 16, in which God affirms that he raised up a certain man of eminent wickedness for the express purpose of manifesting, by means of him, the divine power and character. || *Even for this same purpose*, etc : for this very thing *have I raised thee up*, that is, have I brought thee into being, *that I might show my power in thee*, that is, in thy destruction, and *that my name might be declared throughout all the earth*, that is, that I might become known far and wide as the God of power and justice.

18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will*, etc. In view of the two passages quoted from the Jewish scriptures, it follows that God claims the right of showing favor to whomsoever he will, selecting the objects of it as he pleases, without any good desert on their part as the ground of it ; and claims the right of withholding favor from whomsoever he will, hardening such a person and sentencing

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault ?  
 20 for who hath resisted his will ? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say  
 21 to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor ?

ing him to destruction.—The apostle's design did not require him to enter into an explanation of the *maner* in which God hardens a person's heart ; it is merely a fact as presented in scripture, with which he was concerned. Compare Eph. 1 : 5, 11. 2 Thess. 2 : 11. He aims to fix the attention on God, and to trace all things to him, as the original sovereign controller, as doing his own pleasure, carrying out his own purposes, both in cases of mercy and of wrath. Since God claims this for himself, a Jewish adherent to the Old Testament must admit it ; though the application of it to his own nation might make him demur. It is the righteous God, revealed in the Old Testament, whom that same book represents as originating distinctions in regard to the issues to which men come.

19. At this point, a person disposed to make objections would naturally say, If God treats mercifully whom he will, and hardens whom he will, why does he still find fault ? His will is accomplished ; why should he complain against us ?—In replying to this, the apostle suggests, that such a thought is presumption in *man* towards *God* ; that God has a supreme right to determine the destination of that which he creates ; and that the design of God is supremely good, while the manner of effecting it is entirely just in respect both to God and to man. *Thou wilt then say unto me*, etc. It may be well, in order to apprehend the spirit of this passage, to conceive here of a Jewish objector, since the discussion has a direct bearing on the rejection of the Jews. || *Why doth he yet find fault ?*

Why does God, who hardens whom he will, still find fault with us for our sins ? || *For who hath resisted his will ?* That is, Who hath effectually resisted it, so as to endanger the accomplishment of the divine purposes, or to bring about a result not contemplated in the divine mind ?—The question is grounded on the principle, that the almighty power of God and his supremacy in all respects render the accomplishment of his absolute will and of his determinations a certainty.

20. *Nay but, O man*; etc. True indeed, the apostle rejoins, no man can defeat the will of God.—Allusion may here be made, in the address, *O man*, to the contrast between man, ignorant, impotent, wholly dependent, and God independent, almighty, and omniscient : *Who art thou*, weak, ignorant, dependent man, that thou *repliest against God*, calling in question his justice ? What presumption, to contend against God !—The apostle would thus disclaim all right, in any one, to arraign the justice and wisdom of God in his treatment of men. || *Shall the thing formed say*, etc. Compare Is. 45 : 9. No creature has a right to find fault for not being made a different creature from what he is : it is not for him to know the reasons why precisely such powers, and not different ones, were given him, and such relations, and not different ones, were established for him, and such designs, and not others, were to be answered by his creation.

21. *Hath not the potter*, etc. As a potter decides what kind of vessels to make of his clay, and for what use to make this vessel and for what use to

**22 What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels**

make that, so may God in his supremacy make such beings as he pleases, and make them for accomplishing such purposes as he pleases. The sovereign right of God to do whatever he pleases is here maintained. Before the creation, it must obviously have been for the Creator alone to determine what orders of being to create and what individuals, with what capacities to endue each, in what relations and circumstances to place him, and what issues to bring about in regard to him. The objects to be subserved by the existence of each, and to be effected by the divine administration towards him, depended on God's sovereign pleasure.

22, 23. The design of God, relative both to the perdition of some and the salvation of others, and his manner of accomplishing that design, show the unreasonableness of calling in question his right to find fault with the wicked.—*What if God willing to show his wrath, etc.*; choosing to show his wrath against sin, and to make his power known in defeating the ill designs of those who are unreconciled to him, overruling their wickedness, and bringing them to merited punishment.—God's design is, on the one hand, the manifestation of his wrath against sin and his power in thwarting and punishing the wicked, and, on the other, the manifestation of his abundant mercy. This design, so eminently worthy, requires that there be, on the one hand, persons who shall be deserving objects of his wrath, persons who, by their transgressions and their abuse of the long suffering of God, shall become prepared for destruction; and, on the other hand, persons on whom God will exercise his mercy in bringing them to repentance, in pardoning them, and preparing them through holiness for glory. The former are

denominated, in these verses, *the vessels of wrath*, those on whom the wrath of God is to be exercised and by the punishment of whom his hatred of sin is to be manifested; the latter are *the vessels of mercy*, persons on whom the mercy of God is to be exercised and through whose salvation his mercy is to be manifested.—*Endured*. It is observable that in these verses the apostle uses the past tense, *endured, prepared*, as if describing what had actually taken place, or having an actual case in mind: the use of the present tense would be more suitable for the statement of a general principle, or mode of operation. His mode of speaking may be explained by supposing that he conceived of himself as at the close of the world's history and at the awarding of men respectively to their final states; or, by supposing that he had in mind the actual case, which he was discussing, of the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of believers in Christ as the people of God. The former supposition is hardly consistent with the cool and unimpassioned character of the context: the latter seems harmonious with the mention in the 24th verse of Christians, as being the vessels of mercy just spoken of. Such an allusion to the Jewish people might rebuke the complaining spirit of the objector by reminding him of the great forbearance of God towards them, and might show that God had just ground for finding fault.—In such a view of the passage, however, the Jews must be considered as furnishing a specimen of a general mode of operation in the divine government, an instance of the manner in which God effects his design of showing his wrath against sin and making his power known. || *The vessels of wrath*; those on whom the divine wrath was to be exercised, and through whose punishment that wrath

23 of wrath fitted to destruction : and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which 24 he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath

was to be manifested. Compare the expression in verse 21, "another to dishonor." || *Fitted to destruction*; prepared in their characters for destruction, so that their punishment would evidently be just. God's purpose was fulfilled, and their ill desert and destruction resulted from their voluntary course of life by which their characters were fixed. In their disobedience they acted according to their own hearts and became prepared for perdition. The history of the Jewish people amply illustrates the apostle's view: after 'much long-suffering' on the part of God, during which they filled up the measure of their iniquities, Matt. 23: 32-38, his wrath overtook them (compare 11: 7-10. 1 Thess. 2: 16), the beginning, doubtless, of the wrath to come. As an individual instance, also, Pharaoh furnishes a similar illustration; for every one, in reading the account concerning him in Exodus, chapters 5-14, sees that he wrought out his own destruction freely, against warnings, against his own convictions, abusing the clemency of God and perverting it into an occasion of continued obstinacy in disobedience: and thus Pharaoh is a signal example of a person accomplishing a divine purpose respecting himself in the exercise of his own will, and being himself the procuring cause of his own destruction.

23. *And that he might make known*, etc.; and, on the other hand, what if God, that he might make known the *riches of his glory*, his rich, or abundant, grace in which the divine glory so eminently consists. The word *glory* being here contrasted with *wrath* in the preceding verse refers to the grace, or beneficence, of God. || *On the vessels of mercy*; the persons on whom the mercy of God was to be exercised. Compare the expression in verse 21,

"one to honor." || *Which he had before prepared unto glory*. In the case of those whom God had appointed for mercy and salvation, as well as in the case of the opposite class, a preparation, as to character, is effected for the glorious state to which he purposed to bring them. They are here spoken of as *prepared*, either comparatively, or by anticipation.—It was, probably, not without design that while the apostle speaks of the others merely as *being fitted*, or *having become fitted*, for destruction, he here says that *God prepared for glory* those whom he had appointed for that result. In this latter case, a special influence from God was necessary to secure the preparation; in the former, without any special agency of God, preparation would be going on by men's own choices.—The sentence, in this verse, is left incomplete. The full intent of it, however, is easily seen, and may be expressed in the following manner: What if God, that he might make known his rich grace on the vessels of mercy, called them to the enjoyment of his mercy, and prepared them for glory?—The purport of the whole question in vs. 22 and 23 may be thus stated: What if God purposing to manifest his wrath against sin, and his abundant mercy, should deal with men in such a manner as has been represented, can any objection be made against his purpose and his course of proceeding? and has he not ground for still finding fault with sinners?

24. *Even us, whom he hath called*, etc.; rather, according to the order of the words in the original, *Whom he also called, us, etc.* The word *whom* refers to *vessels of mercy* whom God called to be partakers of his mercy; us, who believe in Christ, has God thus called not only from among Jews who had regarded them-

25 called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called

27 the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be

28 as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved; for he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the LORD make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

selves as his people, but also from among Gentiles. Before those who believe in Christ had become believers, they were not in reality the people of God; but by his signal mercy they have become such and are acknowledged as such by him, in accordance with his declaration through the prophet Hosea.

25, 26. *As he saith also in Osee [Hosea].* See Hos. 1: 10. 2: 23; language, which, though originally used in reference to idolatrous Israelites, was easily and naturally applicable also to Gentiles.

27-29. That some of the Jews, as vessels of mercy, would be saved from the wrath which was impending over the nation, and would be called and admitted to the blessings of the gospel as true people of God, is obvious also from declarations of the prophet Isaiah.—*Esaias also crieth; proclaimeth.* See Is. 10: 22, 23; the ideas in which verses, here quoted, may be thus expressed: However numerous, like the sand of the sea, might be the children of Israel, a remnant would be saved from the impending destruction; for the Lord fulfills his word and he decrees in righteousness; because his decreed word the Lord will perform on the land.

29. *And as Esaias said before.* See Is. 1: 9. The idea of the prophet in this passage may be expressed

in the following manner: Unless the Lord of hosts had reserved a seed for us, we should have been utterly cut off, like Sodom and Gomorrah. But he had determined to reserve a seed, a surviving remnant, to prevent utter extinction. || *Sabaoth;* a Hebrew word signifying *hosts*, either the angelic hosts; see 2 Chron. 18: 18. Ps. 103: 21 (compare Luke 2: 13); or the visible heavens; see Gen. 2: 1. The expression *Lord of hosts* is equivalent to the *Lord almighty*.

30-33. The apostle has now prepared the way for a distinct statement of the positive reason for the rejection of the Jews. He has maintained that it was not caused by a failure on the part of God to keep his word, vs. 6-13; that God bestows mercy according to his own good pleasure without any claim to his favor on the part of men, vs. 15-18; and that, according to the prophetic scriptures, Gentiles were to become partakers of God's special mercy, while a vast number of Jews would be destroyed and comparatively few of them be really the people of God, vs. 25-29. In view of these things, he now asks, *What shall we say then?* The reply states the fact in the case and gives the explanation of it: namely, We have to say, that Gentiles who were not pursuing after righteousness, not striving for it, and

30 **W**HAT shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, 31 even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to 32 the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For 33 they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

who would therefore seem very unlikely to attain it, have yet attained to righteousness, that is, the righteousness which comes from faith: but Israel, the Jews, who were diligently following after, or, in their own esteem, seeking scrupulously to obey, a law which defines and requires righteousness, and who therefore might be regarded as likely to attain to righteousness, did not reach the law, but fell short of it and of righteousness. And why? Because they sought righteousness not by faith, but by works of the law; for the principle of justification, or of being accounted as righteous, by faith in Christ, was so offensive to them that they would not admit it.

30. *Which followed not*, etc. The idea of *diligently pursuing* is contained in the word here rendered *followed*.—The Gentiles who had not, previously, been earnestly seeking righteousness and favor with God, having no written divine law for their guide and not following “the law written in their hearts,” 2: 15, who were regarded also by the Jews only with aversion, as sinners and outcasts from God, yet attained to righteousness; that, namely, which is of faith.

31. *The law of righteousness*; the law which shows what is righteousness, which requires it and promises to reward it. Though the Jews were, at least in their own esteem, earnestly pursuing after compliance with this law, yet they had not attained to the fulfilment of its requisitions. However strenuous any Jews might be in

endeavoring to obey their law, viewed as a directory of man's spirit, they would fail to render it a complete obedience and would still be sinners, needing a different mode of justification than by their own obedience. If the law were viewed in its ceremonial prescriptions, even had the Jews observed these with the utmost exactness, still external obedience cannot recommend a person to Him who requires the heart.

32. *Wherefore?* Why did they not attain to righteousness? Because they sought it not from faith, but from works of the law, as if they could attain it by obedience to the law. || *As it were*; that is, *as if* from the law they could obtain righteousness which would avail for their acceptance with God. || *For they stumbled at that stumbling stone*; more properly, *at the stumbling stone*; that is, at Christ; for the term, *stone of stumbling*, had become significant of Christ. Compare 1 Pet. 2: 7, 8. They were offended at Christ, as to his character and claims, and at the cardinal principle in the gospel that men's justification proceeds from faith in Christ.

33. *As it is written*. See Is. 28: 16. 8: 14. || *Rock of offence*; a rock which would occasion offence and ruin. || *Whosoever believeth on him*, etc. Whosoever confides in it, that is, the stone, or confides in him, that is, Christ, who is thus denominated, shall not suffer the shame of abused and disappointed confidence, shall have no occasion to haste

## CHAPTER X.

Desire for the Jews' salvation, with acknowledgment of their zeal, though a mistaken one, towards God, 1-4. Difference between justification through the Mosaic law and through faith in Christ, 5-18. The Jews, made acquainted with the gospel and, in their own scriptures, warned of their liability to be rejected, 14-21.

### 1 BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel

away (compare Is. 28 : 16), to another object of trust, but shall be truly blessed. — The apostle quotes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew original; hence the passage slightly differs in its words from the corresponding passage in our version of the Old Testament. He seems, also, to have dropped the figure, which was in the prophet's mind, of a building with a large and firm corner stone, and to have contemplated Christ himself under this appellation. The term, *whosoever*, also, is of special significance; meaning *every one*, indiscriminately, whether Gentile or Jew.

In this closing paragraph of the chapter, vs. 30-33, the cause of the rejection of the Jews has been distinctly presented: they took offence at the cardinal principle of the gospel, namely, that faith in Christ, not obedience to the law of Moses, is the medium of justification in the sight of God. The Jews relied on the law of Moses, and were unwilling to abandon the thought that, through the law, they could acquire a meritorious title to the kingdom of God. Refusing to connect themselves with Christ, the Head of this kingdom, they cut themselves off from its blessings. To their rejection of Christ must the fact be traced, that God rejected them from being his people.

### CHAPTER X.

The apostle, having stated the  
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cause of the Jews' rejection, 9 : 30-33, still dwells on that part of the subject, after asserting anew his earnest desire for their salvation, and acknowledging their zeal towards God; a zeal, however, founded on mistake. They still persisted in relying on the Mosaic law and consequently on their own religious deeds, though Christ, in establishing the principle that righteousness is to be reckoned to those who believe in him, or that faith in him is the condition of justification, had put an end to the law. The difference between justification through the law and justification through faith is then illustrated, and the thought fully presented that faith in Christ is the medium of salvation for all men, Jews and Gentiles alike; for *whosoever* relies on the Lord Jesus shall be saved. Vs. 1-13.

By a series of questions and by quotations from the Old Testament, the apostle shows that the Jews had no valid excuse, since they had had all necessary advantages for securing the blessings of the gospel; he also shows that warning had been given them of the hazard, which they were incurring, of being rejected from the divine favor. Vs. 13-21.

1. *My heart's desire and prayer*, etc. Lest the views which the apostle had presented, and which he was about to affirm with greater fulness, should seem to imply an indifference to the welfare of the Jews, he strongly asserts anew his heart's desire for their salvation.

2 is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

2. *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God*, etc. He could not but cherish earnest desires for their good, when he remembered their zeal towards God, or in respect to God. Their zeal, however, was not *according to knowledge*; it was not an intelligent zeal, regulated by knowledge of the way which God had appointed for obtaining acceptance with him.

3. *God's righteousness—their own righteousness*. These terms designate respectively God's method of treating men as righteous, 1 : 17. 3 : 21, 22, and the Jews' idea of becoming righteous by their own deeds. Disregarding God's method of accounting men as righteous, acting as if they knew it not, and seeking to establish a righteousness of their own by their own deeds, they have not subjected themselves to God's method.

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness*, etc. Their zeal in seeking to establish a righteousness of their own, by a supposed obedience to the law of Moses, is a mistaken zeal; for Christ in establishing the principle that every one, of whatever nation, who believes in him is accepted of God, his faith being set to his account as righteousness, 4 : 22–24, has put an end to the law on which the Jews rely. Their seeking to establish their own righteousness was therefore utterly vain, since only by subjecting themselves to God's method could they be saved.—This was eminently true of the law, viewed as a ritual system; in which respect the Jews generally relied on it for acceptance with God: through Christ the ritual system was abolished. The law viewed as a code of moral

and religious principles, though, as a directory of feelings and conduct, it must always have force and was not destroyed by Christ, Matt. 5 : 17, yet so far as justification in the sight of God is concerned, never had force; for the sinfulness of men always required a different mode of justification, and the apostle finds evidence in the Old Testament that faith was the requisite for men's acceptance with God. Still, accommodating ourselves to human conceptions, we may justly say that, when Christ came, he established a different system, and made it evident that salvation cannot be obtained through the law. Compare 7 : 1–5.—The distinction between the moral law and the ritual, as already noted on 3 : 20, was of no practical utility to Jews, since, as the whole Mosaic code was binding on them by divine authority, the observance of rites was obedience to God, in their esteem, as much as the compliance with moral duties: if they did what the law enjoined, whether ceremonial or moral, it was doing, they flattered themselves, the will of God, and gave them a claim for reward.

5–10. Having distinctly mentioned two kinds of righteousness, or two methods of being accounted as righteous in the sight of God, one of which is entirely set aside by Christ, the apostle shows the difference between them, in order to place in due prominence faith in Christ as necessary for acceptance with God, and to urge the sentiment that, without regard to the distinction between Jew and Gentile, *whosoever believes in him shall be saved*. He here avails himself of language used in the Old Testament

**5** FOR Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven?

which, either in itself, or by a slight modification as giving it a Christian aspect, teaches and illustrates this point.

5. *For Moses describeth.* See Lev. 18: 5. || *The righteousness which is of the law:* denominated in the third verse *their own righteousness.* || *The man which doeth these things,* etc. The actual performance of what the law enjoins, as to the heart and the conduct, is necessary in order to be saved by the law: whoever is thus righteous in view of the law will be saved by it: whoever fails of being thus righteous cannot, on the ground of a legal system, be saved. The *doing* of the law, as to all its requisitions, is necessary for salvation on a legal basis.

6. *But the righteousness which is of faith;* that which is reckoned to the believer on account of his faith, and named in the third verse *God's righteousness.* Compare 9: 32.—In this and several following verses, the apostle employs language which Moses had used in addressing the people of Israel, Deut. 30: 11–14, modifying it so as to render it a suitable medium for illustrating the distinctive principle of the gospel.—Moses had said, “This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it:” as if he had said, God has placed you in peculiarly favorable circum-

stances for doing his will; he has made it clearly known to you; you have no need to send a messenger to heaven to learn it; you have no need to send to remote regions of the earth in order to learn it. What he requires of you he has brought near to you; and all what is needed is, that you have a heart to do his will. The apostle, giving a Christian turn to this language and illustrating by it the requisition of the gospel, says, as it were, Indulge not the thought that God has not made provision for our salvation and has not placed us in favorable circumstances for obtaining acceptance with him; say not, in disbelief of what has actually been done in our behalf, that Christ has not come down from heaven to be our Saviour; he is far away from us; would he but come and show us the way, we would walk in it: who can go up to heaven to bring him down to us? Say not, again, in a spirit of disbelief, Christ has not arisen from the dead: he is far away from us: who can descend to the region of the dead to bring him up to us, that we may obey him? And while the gospel bids you not to indulge in such disbelief, what does it positively say to you? It says, Christ has come down from heaven and has come up from the region of the dead, to be your Lord and Saviour: the word of God is thus brought near to you; it is not afar off: what it requires of you is easily apprehended and is level to your necessities. It is, as Moses said, in your mouth and in your heart; and all you have to do, according to the righteousness of faith, is, with your mouth to avow Jesus to be your Lord and with your heart to confide in him; for, according to the righteousness of faith, or the requisi-

7 That is, to bring Christ down *from above*: or, Who shall descend into the deep? That is, to bring up Christ again from 8 the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even in thy mouth, and in thy heart*. That is the word of faith, 9 which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath

tion of the gospel, believing with the heart is accepted as righteousness by which you will be justified in the sight of God, and the acknowledgment of Jesus as your Lord, with the sincere yielding to him of your heart, will secure your salvation. You are not required to do what the law enjoins, so as to have a claim on God for reward: this would be as hopeless and as morally impossible as it would be naturally impossible for a person to ascend to heaven, or to descend to the place of the departed, in order to bring Christ to the earth. You are not required to do any such impossibilities; but are required simply to believe in the Lord Jesus; and by a cordial faith in him you will be accepted and treated as righteous. Indulge not, then, such questionings; propose not such impossibilities: but welcome the gospel into your heart; believe in Christ who has descended from heaven and has arisen from the dead. Whoever in his heart believes in Christ shall be saved. || *Say not—Who shall ascend into heaven?* That is, etc.; to speak thus, the apostle says, is the same as to require that Christ should be brought down from heaven, as though he had not already come to earth; and it is a virtual disbelief of his having come.

7. *Who shall descend into the deep?* The *deep*, or the *abyss*, was a word used, according to the popular custom, to signify the place of departed spirits. This was conceived of as under the earth, and was the contrast of *heaven*, which was above.—|| *That is, to bring up Christ*, etc. To make this inquiry is the same as to require that some one should go down to the abode of the departed and bring up

Christ, as though he had not already risen from the dead: it would be a disbelief of his resurrection, and would be, like the proposal for sending a person to heaven to bring Christ down to earth, to require an impossibility.

8. *The word is nigh thee*, etc.: the word of God is nigh thee. || *That is the word of faith*, etc. This language of Moses, Deut. 30: 14, the apostle proceeds to say, is virtually the same as the word, or doctrine, of faith which we preach; it happily expresses the doctrine of the gospel. As the word of God was very nigh to the Israelites, in their mouth and in their heart, so is the word, or doctrine, of faith something very nigh to us: it is in our mouth and in our heart; we have not to search far and wide to know what is required, or to find opportunities for obeying it: it is not a toilsome routine of observances that is required; it is not a laborious and hopeless attempt to gain for ourselves a claim to recompense from God for obeying his statutes; it is not a requisition for impossibilities: it is, rather, something which is exactly suited to our necessities, something on which we may lay hold, and which may at once make us blessed: let but the *mouth* avow our subjection to Jesus and the *heart* yield him its homage of love and trust.

9. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth*, etc. Adapting himself to the language of Moses, the apostle first mentions the acknowledgment *with the mouth*, or the profession of Jesus as our Lord, and next the believing *with the heart* in him as the Son of God. || *That God hath raised him from the dead*. The resurrection of Christ from the dead was a pre-emi-

10 raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth 11 confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith,

nent proof of his being the Son of God, 1: 4. To believe with the heart this great fact, then, was the same as to believe that he was the Son of God, and to become his disciple. — The avowal of Jesus as our Lord, by which we make, on our part, an acknowledgment corresponding to his claim of being Lord of all men, is of course to be regarded as sincere and indicative of our hearts' trusting in him ; the believing in the heart and the avowal with the mouth involve each other. Hence, in the following verse, the apostle reverses the order, having no further occasion to conform to the order of words used by Moses.

10. *For with the heart*, etc. This verse is a repetition, in the form of an abstract and universal proposition, of the idea in the preceding verse.—Believing with the heart is accepted as righteousness which justifies in the sight of God ; and acknowledgment, with the mouth, of what is thus believed in the heart, brings salvation. Compare Matt. 10: 32. The apostle does not ascribe greater efficacy to confessing with the mouth than to believing with the heart ; for the righteousness of faith which justifies also saves ; justification and salvation involving one another, as believing and confessing, according to the scripture use of the terms, involve one another.

The difference between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith, presented in vs. 5–10, is that the former requires a perfect *doing* of all things commanded, and thus the *acquiring of a title* to blessings as a recompence ; the latter, contemplating us as sinners under condemnation, and the ample provision which God, of his free mercy, has made for our spiritual good, and his promises of pardon and aid, requires us to *believe his declarations*, to *confide* in them,

and to receive as *his free gift* the needed blessings. The difference is that between *doing* and *believing*, as a condition of acceptance ; and as Christ established the system whose principle is, that *believing with the heart* is the medium of acceptance, the Mosaic law, which required *doing*, as the medium, is terminated by him.—Another difference may be stated, as intimately connected with that which seems to have been mainly in the apostle's mind : the *doing* of all things commanded keeps a person in suspense during his whole life as to the result, since at any time he may be led into transgression, or may fail to do some duty, and thus forfeit the blessings ; the *believing*, on the contrary, is put at once to a person's account as righteousness, and he is, at present, actually justified and adopted as a child of God ; he is in an incipient state of salvation, with the purpose, on the part of God, of making all things co-operate for his good. In the one case, we have the state of a servant ; in the other, that of a son with the distinctive affections, hopes and prospects warranted by the relation of a son to a wise, good and powerful father.—In view, also, of the wearisome routine of service to which the Jews, in the time of our Lord and the apostles, held themselves bound, it would be profitable to compare Acts 15: 10 with Matt. 11: 28–30, as showing the practical difference between a scrupulous Jew and an enlightened, confiding disciple of Christ.

11. *For the scripture saith*, etc. The apostle now confirms the sentiment that *faith* in Christ is the sure condition of salvation to *all*, whether Jews or Gentiles, and consequently, as affirmed in v. 4, that the Mosaic system is ended. He here produces

12 Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith,

the same passage as in 9: 33, but with particular reference to the expression *whosoever*.

12. *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.* The *Greek* in contrast with the *Jew* means, of course, the *Gentile*, a frequent use of the word in the New Testament. The system of mercy by Christ acknowledges no distinction, in regard to the way of acceptance with God, between a Jew and a Gentile; of the one as well as of the other faith is required, and to both alike it is available for justification. || *For the same Lord over all*, etc.; more correctly, For the same being, Christ, is Lord of all, of Jews and Gentiles. *Acts 10: 36*, rich in blessings to all who call on him, that is, who sincerely acknowledge him as their Lord and rely on him, and invoke him, for blessings.

13. *For, Whosoever*, etc. By another quotation from the Old Testament, *Joel 2: 32*, he confirms the sentiment that *all*, of whatever nation, who call on the name of the Lord, as confiding in him, will be richly blessed.

14, 15. *How then*, etc. The apostle now anticipates a thought which might arise in the mind of a Jew, as accounting for the failure of his countrymen to receive the gospel; namely, that they had not all been favored with the hearing of it. The thought is conveyed in a series of questions

which very naturally succeed one another, the last of them implying that preachers of the gospel had not been sent to the Jews. || *As it is written*; *Is. 52: 7*. In the passage as here translated, it would have been better, instead of the expression *that preach the gospel of peace*, to have said *that publish glad tidings of peace*. These words of the prophet are quoted to confirm the idea that preachers must be sent forth to proclaim the gospel. Though the words referred primarily to the joyful event of the captive Jews' return from the Babylonian exile, they are happily expressive of the joyful tidings of redemption by Christ, or of the gospel, to which their ultimate reference was doubtless intended.

16. *But they have not all obeyed*, etc. Instead of allowing the thought contained in the series of questions to be a just explanation of the deplorable rejection of the Jews, the apostle affirms, They did not all obey the gospel; and by their not obeying the message sent them in the gospel, they have fulfilled what the prophet *Isaiah* said, *53: 1*, Lord, who hath believed the message which he has heard from us?—The words, *our report*, mean the thing reported by us, that is, the message which has been heard from us.—The natural reply to the inquiry made by the prophet is, No one has believed it; that is, in

17 Lord, who hath believed our report? So then, faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, and 20 by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

accordance with our ordinary modes of speaking, very few have believed it, compared with all who heard it. Compare John 1:11, 12. 3:32, 33.

17. *So then, faith cometh by hearing*, etc. In order to set forth distinctly the thought that the Jews had heard the gospel, the apostle shows what is implied in the language which he had just quoted from Isaiah. From the prophet's language we infer, he, as it were, says, that faith, or believing, comes from hearing a message; and the message announced in the hearing of the people is, in the present case, through the word of God; it is the gospel, as the utterance of God which has come to our *hearing*. By stating the connection between hearing a message and believing it, or reposing faith in it, the apostle has prepared the way to propose directly the question, whether the Jews in all regions had not heard the gospel.

18. *Have they not heard?* That is, Have not the Jews heard the message which has come through the word of God? In reply to this question, the Old Testament again furnishes language which may well be employed to express the wide diffusion among the Jews of the knowledge of the gospel. || Yes, verily, *Their sound*, etc. See Ps. 19:4.

19. *But I say.* Still further; warning had been given to the Jews that

they were in danger of being rejected, and that Gentiles would eventually be admitted, instead of them, to the divine favor.—*Did not Israel know?* Did not the Jews know that they were in danger of being cast away from God? In reply to this inquiry, the language of Moses is first quoted, in which warning of their danger had been given. In Deut. 32:21, Moses had addressed the children of Israel in language, of which the following is the purport: By means of those whom you do not consider worthy to be called a nation, I will excite in you a jealous sense of the privileges which you will lose, and by means of those whom you call an impious people, I will make you angry with yourselves for having allowed your distinguished blessings to be taken from you.—The intimation here is, that they were in danger of losing their exalted privileges and of holding them transferred to others.—|| *A foolish nation*; morally foolish, wicked, neglecting the true wisdom. Compare Ps. 14:1.

20, 21. *But Esaias is very bold*, etc. Besides the intimation which Moses had given, the prophet Isaiah had openly and boldly spoken of Gentiles as receiving knowledge of God and being admitted to his favor, 65:1; and of the Jews as a disobedient people, to whom God had in vain been perpetually directing his expos-

## CHAPTER XI.

Rejection of the Jews, as a people, not final, 1-10. Through the transgression of the Jews, the Gentiles obtain salvation ; the Jews will, in their turn, be excited to regain favor with God, to the advantage, also, of the Gentiles, 11, 12. Honor of being an apostle to the Gentiles, since from their conversion benefit will result to the Jews : Gentiles cautioned against glorying over the Jews and warned of their own danger, 13-24. The Jews yet to be recovered to the divine favor, 25-32. Adoration of God, and ascription of glory to him, 33-36.

1 I SAY then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the

tulations, 65 : 2.—No valid excuse, then, remained for the Jews ; and they could make no plea in abatement of their guilt, or for mitigating the sentence of God against them.

### CHAPTER XL

The passages of scripture last quoted, 10 : 19-21, have, at first sight, a very discouraging aspect towards the Jews, and naturally suggest the inquiry, Whether God has absolutely and finally cast away his people. The apostle earnestly rejects such a thought ; and affirms that as there was in the time of Elijah the prophet, when the Israelites forsook the worship of the true God, a remnant who faithfully abstained from idolatry, so now there is a remnant, selected by the free mercy of God, not on account of any just claim of their own ; a remnant, which continued in favor with him, while the rest had become hardened, and were under his displeasure. Vs. 1-10.

Another question then arises : Is the transgression of the Jews to have its sole and final issue in their destruction ? Far from it, is the reply. Instead of this, through their transgression salvation is to go to the Gentiles, and by occasion of the Gentiles' enjoying the blessings of the gospel

the Jews are to be excited to a sense of their own loss, and to the regaining of their position of favor with God. Moreover, by the Jews' being again received into favor with God the Gentiles will, in their turn, be blessed in a far higher degree than before. Vs. 11, 12.

The apostle regards it a great honor to be an apostle to the Gentiles, since, by promoting their conversion, he is contributing to the recovery of the Jews. He cautions the Gentile Christians against feelings of superiority to the Jews : they ought rather to learn, from the case of the Jews, their own danger. Vs. 13-24.

Finally ; the hardness into which the Jews had fallen is to have an end ; they are yet to be recovered to the divine favor and to salvation. Vs. 25-32.

The discussion of the Jews' rejection closes with adoration of the wisdom and knowledge of God and ascription of glory to him. Vs. 33-36.

1. *I say then*, etc. In view of the scripture passages which had just been produced, 10 : 19-21, the question would naturally arise to a person of quick sensibilities towards the Jews, Has then God utterly cast away his people?—The force of the question lies particularly in the words *cast*

2 tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,  
 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine  
 4 altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to  
 5 *the image of Baal*. Even so then at this present time, also,  
 6 there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more

*away*; the original term expressing a complete abandonment, as though, humanly speaking, God would have no more to do with them. || *God forbid*. The apostle thus strongly expresses his dissent from the thought, and seems to start back from it with abhorrence. || *For I also am an Israelite*, etc. He here gives a reason for the strong feeling which he had expressed: the query proposed could not but be revolting to him as a true Israelite. All his sympathies with the Jews would seem to be aroused, as well as his regard for God's faithfulness to his purposes.—The apostle's belonging to the tribe of Benjamin is particularly mentioned (compare Phil. 3: 5), because this tribe and that of Judah were the two which remained faithful to the royal family of David, when the ten tribes revolted under Rehoboam, 1 Kgs. 12: 20-23. These two tribes were eminently *the Jews*; and a person's descent through one of these would be a sort of guaranty that love to the Jewish people had not become extinct in his breast.

2-4. *God hath not cast away*, etc. God hath not thrust away, wholly and hopelessly, his people whom he foreknew, and whom he has so often acknowledged as his.—The parallel case which the apostle proceeds to state seems to show that *the nation* was here meant, and not a select portion of it. God had fore-appointed and foreknown the Jewish nation as

an object of his favor, and separated it from other nations as a medium for the spiritual welfare of the world. || *Wot ye not?* Know ye not?—The case in hand may be illustrated by what took place in the time of Elijah the prophet. In the defection of Israel from the worship of the true God, a defection so general that the prophet spoke of himself as being left alone, God assured him that several thousands had remained faithful, 1 Kgs. 19: 10, 18. So now, though the nation in general had rejected the Messiah, there is a remnant, according to God's electing mercy, who have received the Messiah. || *Maketh intercession*, etc.; more properly, makes complaint to God against Israel.

5. *Even so then*, etc.; so now there is a remnant which abides in favor with God, according to his gracious election of them out of the nation to be partakers of his mercy. Compare 8: 28-30. 9: 18, 23, 24.

6. *And if by grace*, then, etc. The apostle seized the occasion, in passing, to inculcate the truly gracious character of this election, or of the divine purpose by which this remnant had been selected and was preserved. The tendency among the Jews to reliance on their religious deeds, as procuring them a claim on God, made it necessary, in the apostle's view, to assert the contrary sentiment at every favorable opportunity. || *No more of*

7 grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then ?  
 Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for ; but the  
 8 election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded; according  
 as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber,  
 eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not  
 9 hear, unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be  
 made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a re-

*works*; it does not proceed from works, as a recompense for them : it is purely of grace. If it were a result of works, then it would not be of grace ; else grace would cease to be grace. || *But if it be of works*, etc. This latter part of the verse is only a reversed statement of the same idea.

7. *What then*, etc. What follows, then, says the apostle, from the reply which has been given to the question, whether God has finally cast away his people ? He had said, in vs. 2-6, that God has not cast them away wholly and hopelessly, but that a chosen remnant of them still continues in favor with him. It follows from this, that Israel, as a people, have not obtained that which they are continually seeking ; namely, a righteousness which shall secure to them a claim for acceptance with God ; but the elect remnant have obtained it, being justified and accepted through their faith in Christ, while the rest became hardened. || *Were blinded*. The more general term *hardened* better expresses the original word. — The contrast which the apostle here expresses between two parts of the nation is of the same nature as that which he presents in 9 : 18 ; and in each of these passages the *hardening* results from men's own sinful preferences, both as a natural consequence and as a divine judicial visitation.

8. *According as it is written*; Is. 29 : 10. Deut. 29 : 4. The apostle considers as applicable to the Jews of his time, who had become hardened and had rejected Christ, the language

in which Isaiah and Moses had described the people of their times : a spiritual lethargy had come over them ; they were as men indulging in drowsiness who heed not the most pressing claims ; they saw not, they heard not, the things pertaining to their spiritual welfare. || *Unto this day*. The quotation from the Old Testament ends with the words *unto this day* ; and it thus served the apostle's purpose to convey the thought, that the moral insensibility with which the Jews had been chargeable in former ages still continued. — When God is said to have given the spirit of slumber, blind eyes and deaf ears, this mode of speaking is in acknowledgment of his sovereign disposal of circumstances and events, even as to those things which are brought about by the agency of men, and of which men are themselves the guilty cause ; so that the idea of an inevitable and, so far as men are concerned, irresponsible, fatality does not belong to this phraseology. Compare Is. 29 : 3, where Jehovah is represented as saying, I will camp against thee round about, and I will lay siege against thee, etc., though it was the king of Assyria who was thus to lay siege against Jerusalem. See, also, Is. 10 : 5-7, where in union with God's expressed design to employ the Assyrian king as an agent for inflicting vengeance, the Assyrian king is represented as impelled by his own ambitious purposes : "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so ; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few."

9, 10. *And David saith*; Ps. 69 :

10 compense unto them : let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always.  
 11 I SAY then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid : but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto  
 12 the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles ; how much more their ful-

22, 23. The imprecations of the psalmist on his enemies, here quoted, the apostle considers as foreshowing and illustrating the infliction of divine judgments on those who in their hardness of heart had refused to accept the Messiah : even their enjoyments would become curses, and they would be bowed down under the weight of their calamities. || *Their table*; that is, the provision with which their table is furnished : let it become a means of destruction to them, and be succeeded by a recompence of evil. || *Let their eyes be darkened*, etc. Let them become blind, and make them bend under their woes.—In other words, divine judgments have overtaken, and will rest on, the mass of the nation suitable to those who have become hardened in disobedience to God and opposition to his method of salvation.

11. *I say then, have they stumbled*, etc. The inevitable doom which awaited the mass of the nation, agreeably to the view thus far presented, prompted another inquiry : Is it the design of God, that the Jews, stumbling, taking offence, at the gospel, should fall into perdition ? Is their perdition for their unbelief the final fact in their history, as closing up the designs of God in respect to them ? Is the nation to perish ? || *God forbid*. The inquiry is at once met with pious aversion. Their falling into perdition is so far from being the ultimate design of God, that he has graciously made their rejection of the gospel the occasion of its reception among the Gentiles (compare Acts 13 : 45-49); and its reception among the Gentiles will serve to ex-

cite among Jews a sense of what they have lost and a desire for the blessings of the gospel. || *Through their fall*; more properly, through their blunder, their false step, that is, their trespass in refusing to welcome Christ.—The word rendered *fall* in this clause is different from the one thus rendered in the first, and signifies *false step, fault, trespass*. ¶ *To provoke them to jealousy*; to make them jealous of the Gentiles as having obtained blessings which the Jews regarded as peculiarly theirs; and thus to excite in them a desire to obtain the same blessings for themselves.

12. A still additional result, favorable to the Gentiles, was expected by the apostle : if the trespass of the Jews have been the occasion of good to the Gentiles, and the diminution of the Jews, as the Lord's people, to a mere remnant, have resulted in rich mercy being shown to the Gentiles, what blessings may not be expected for the world when the Jewish believers shall have become full in number! *Now if the fall—and the diminishing of them*, etc. If, moreover, the trespass of the Jews issue in spiritual wealth, or abundant mercy, to the world, that is, to the Gentile world, and their being diminished to a small number, namely, the comparatively small number among them who have embraced the gospel, prove the occasion of rich mercy to the Gentiles, how much more their being increased to a comparatively full number!—As the *diminishing* indicates comparatively *few*, so the *fulness* indicates comparatively *many*, a *comparative fulness*.

13 ness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the  
 14 apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office, if by any  
 means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh,  
 15 and might save some of them. For if the casting away of  
 them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving  
 16 of them be, but life from the dead? For if the first fruit be  
 holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are

13, 14. *For I speak to you Gentiles,* etc. The thoughts expressed in vs. 11, 12, were designed particularly for Gentile believers, as leading them to commiseration and kindness towards the Jews and repressing the disposition to exult over the Jews as cut off from the favor of God. || *I magnify mine office;* I regard as specially honorable the service to which I am called as an apostle to the Gentiles, since, by promoting their conversion, I may excite my countrymen to seek the same blessings as the Gentiles are obtaining and may thus save some of them. || *Apostle of the Gentiles.* See Acts 26: 15-18. || *Provoke to emulation;* excite to jealousy in respect to privileges belonging to the people of God. See verse 11. || *My flesh;* my countrymen. Compare 9: 3.

15. *For if the casting away of them,* etc. The special desire which the apostle felt for the conversion of his countrymen was, also, stimulated by the effect which would result from that event to the Gentiles: for, if the rejection of the Jews had proved the occasion of Gentiles' becoming reconciled to God and enjoying his favor, what might not be expected from their recovery? That event would be signally advantageous to the Gentile world in respect to their more extended conversion to Christ and the more thorough sway of true religion among his avowed disciples; as if life, springing up from among the dead, should exert its re-animating power where only death had reigned, and add new energy to whatever elements of life might have been previously acting.—*Life from the dead* seems to be a figurative expression in

advance of the term *reconciling* used in the former part of the verse, and probably signifies increased activity and efficacy in the extending of the gospel, and the deepening of religious influence, as consequent on the general reception of the gospel among the Jews. It would seem that the Jews are to be remarkably efficient, after their conversion, in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom; and thus the ancient promise to Abraham, In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, Gen. 22: 18. 12: 3. 18: 18, may receive an additional fulfilment. The apostle appears to have regarded the depressed state of the nation, consequent on their rejection of Christ, only as a striking incident, which, in the long lapse of ages, will no more conflict with their being really a chosen people and still included within divine promises, than did their seventy years' captivity in Babylonia.

16. A ground for belief is here presented, that the Jews though now, as a nation, rejected, are as to be recovered to the divine favor. The sacred relation into which God took the nation at its commencement was designed to be enduring, notwithstanding occasional interruptions; and it was intended, that future generations of the people should have a resemblance to the original stock, as being sacred to God and acknowledged by him as truly his. Thus there is to be harmony, in character and relation to God, between the progenitors and their descendants; and in them is to be illustrated the steadfastness of the divine purposes: harmony will characterize the divine plan. If the first-

17 the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou

fruits of the wheat harvest, given up as an oblation to God are sacred, so is the mass of dough which is made of the oblation; if the root be sacred to him, so are the branches which are produced and nourished by the root: if he accept the one, he refuses not to own the other.—In applying these illustrations, the first fruits and the root represent the patriarchs of the nation; the mass of dough and the branches represent the nation descended from them and viewed as a whole. The imagery must not be too closely pressed, as though it included all the descendants of the patriarchs: for many of their descendants were unlike the progenitors in piety, and failed of participating with them in the highest blessings connected with their relation to God, and in the very next verse some of the branches are represented as having been cut off; in plain language, many of the people had lost their relation to God, and were without a title to the divine favor. But with such exceptions as the immutable principles of the government of God require, and as do not impair the accomplishment of his purposes as a whole, God will show eventually that the branches of the Jewish tree are as really regarded by him in a sacred relation as was the root. The mercy which selected and blessed the patriarchs, as founders of a nation, will not forsake the nation which, in accordance with divine promises, proceeded from them: the founders and the nation are regarded as one whole, as the root and the branches are one tree: and the lot of the several parts is to be a kindred one. The apostle saw a unity of plan running through the dispensations of God towards his people, and fully believed that in future generations the sacred relation

of this people to God will be revived and his favor signally bestowed on them.—*If the first fruit be holy.* The first ripe sheaf of the harvest, as the first in the series of sheaves and a pledge of the incoming harvest, was presented to God as an oblation in acknowledgment of him as the giver of the harvest. See Lev. 23: 10. Num. 15: 20. Dent. 18: 4. As thus set apart and consecrated to God, it was ceremonially *holy*, that is, sacred to God. || *The lump is also holy.* The lump, or mass, of dough, made from the first fruits, is also sacred to God.

17. *Thou, being a wild olive tree*, etc. The olive was one of the choice trees of Palestine, and furnished a striking illustration of the topic now under treatment. It was usual to graft cultivated olive trees, when they had lost some of their branches, with scions of the wild olive, which in its natural state bore little or no fruit. || *Among them*; among the branches still standing.

18. *Boast not*, etc. Exult not over the branches which have been cut off.—The apostle would thus check the unkind spirit which some of the Gentile believers indulged towards the fallen Jews; instead of commiserating, they rather gloried over them. || *But if thou boast*, etc.; if you are disposed to glory over them, repress this disposition by remembering the obligations under which the plan of God has placed you to the Jewish people, and your dependence on them for the spiritual privileges to which you have been admitted. Agreeably to the divine arrangement, the Jewish people were the root, you are but branches deriving fruitfulness and beauty from the Jewish root.

19 bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say, then,  
 The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.  
 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou  
 21 standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God  
 spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare  
 22 not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of  
 God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, good-  
 ness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise, thou also shalt  
 23 be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief,  
 shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.  
 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by  
 nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-  
 tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural  
 25 *branches*, be grafted into their own olive-tree? For I would  
 not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest

19-21. *Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, etc.* The Gentiles, still willing to indulge the spirit of glorying over the fallen Jews, might reply to the apostle's suggestion in verse 18, The natural branches were broken off, that we might be set in their place. Very well, says the apostle in rejoinder; it is even so. But remember, the Jews were broken off for lack of faith; and you stand by faith, not by any natural right, not by any claim to your blessed position, but by the grace of God through confiding in his promises and his merciful arrangements; you occupy your position, not by deeds of your own, but by faith in Christ. Indulge not, then, a haughty and arrogant spirit; but rather cherish a salutary dread lest you, too, forfeit the favor of God; for if he spared not the natural branches, you certainly have ground for fearing a similar doom.

22. *Severity*; not an undue and vengeful severity, but a strict adherence to threatenings proceeding from justice; a just severity, as distinguished from that goodness which overlooks ill desert and bestows unmerited benefits. || *On them which fell*; on those who have fallen from his goodness, or from confiding in his

mercy; that is, the unbelieving Jews. || *If thou continue, etc.*; if thou continue trusting in his goodness, and acknowledging its claims on thee.

23. *And they also, etc.* The Jews, too, though now objects of God's strict justice, will again experience his goodness, as soon as they abandon their unbelief (compare 2 Cor. 3: 16); they shall be restored to their position of favor with God, for he is able, consistently with all his declarations, to restore them, and thus in their case, as well as in that of the Gentiles, to manifest his goodness.

24. *For if thou — how much more shall these, etc.* Indeed, it is much more to be expected that the people with whom God originally entered into a covenant should, on abandoning their unbelief, be restored to his favor, than that those, who had not previously been thus favored, should receive blessings which had been promised to his people. From the goodness of God to you Gentiles, then, we may fully believe that goodness is in store for the Jews who are now in a fallen and forlorn state.

25. *For I would not, brethren, etc.* Having cautioned the Gentile believers and given grounds to expect a

ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be  
 26 come in: and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall  
 27 turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. . . .

restoration of the Jews to the divine favor, the apostle now takes the attitude of a prophet disclosing the hitherto concealed purpose of God respecting the Jewish people. || *Mystery.* This word is applied, in the scriptures, to things which *have been kept secret* but which, when disclosed, are perfectly intelligible, as well as to those *truths* which are, even when revealed, *inexplicable* to the human mind. Compare Eph. 3: 3-6. || *Lest ye should be wise*, etc.; lest ye should think too highly of yourselves.—|| *Blindness in part*, etc.; hardness, insensibility to their obligations and to the blessings of the gospel. Compare verse 7. This insensibility may have resulted from God's withholding any positive check to the downward tendencies of the nation, or from their being placed, in consequence of their perverseness, in circumstances which directly deepened their spiritual blindness, so that they became, more and more, fit objects for rejection. In either case, the result, according to the scriptural representations, might be traced to God as manifesting his displeasure and commencing a righteous retribution, and at the same time to *themselves* as abusing their privileges and giving a more free indulgence to their sinful inclinations. Compare Matt. 23: 33-38. 27: 22-25.—|| *Until the fulness*, etc. As the word *fulness* in verse 12 is the contrast of *diminishing*, that is, a *diminished number*, and consequently indicates an *increased number*, a number indefinitely large, so the expression, *fulness of the Gentiles*, probably means here a *very large number* of the Gentiles, not the complete number who are to

embrace the gospel.—The insensibility of the Jews to the privileges of the gospel is to have a limit: after the gospel has had free course among the Gentiles, and Gentiles in very large numbers have been admitted to its blessings, blindness will pass away from the Jews, they will see that the gospel is truly from God and will zealously receive Jesus as the Messiah.

26, 27. *And so all Israel shall be saved.* When the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come into the possession of the Messiah's blessings, the surviving Jews generally and their descendants will become believers in Christ; and thus the collective body of the nation will be saved, though so many will have perished through rejection of the Messiah. It is not implied, in this collective mode of speaking, that *every* Israelite will be saved; for then, as now, salvation will result from believing in Christ, and only those who in heart become his disciples will enjoy the full benefits of the gospel. It would seem, however, from the apostle's language, that the Jews generally will at length become genuine Christians and be saved. || *As it is written*; in Is. 59: 20, 21. The passage as here quoted has some verbal discrepancies from the passage in the Old Testament; and a few words are added, by a natural association of thought, as indicating the spiritual character of the deliverance which the prophet foretold. Strict verbal accuracy was not important; since the apostle's mind was occupied with the general idea of the Deliverer, or Redeemer, becoming acknowledged among the

28 As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet 31 have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy 32 they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Jews, and bestowing blessings on them. Through this Deliverer, the Jews were to be turned away from sin and again to be brought within the terms of a covenant that should never cease.

28. *As concerning the gospel, they are enemies*, etc. It was the plan of God, that the sinfulness of the Jews in rejecting the gospel and their consequent rejection by him should be overruled to the advantage of the Gentiles, as the occasion of introducing among them the gospel. Thus for the sake of the Gentiles, the Jews were treated as enemies to God, and the gospel was taken from them. Compare Matt. 21: 43. || *But as touching the election, they are beloved*, etc.; but, with reference to God's election of them to be his favored people and to be a medium of blessing to the world, they are still beloved, they are still regarded with a design of mercy, for the sake of the patriarchs to whom the promises were made. God's remembrance of the patriarchs and of the promises made to them, still secures this kind regard for the nation; because God is unchangeable, as the following verse affirms.

29. *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*. Repentance is indicative of regret and of a change of mind and conduct on the part of the person concerning whom it is affirmed, and concerning things which he has said or done. Now God does not repent of his bestowal of gifts of grace, and of the calling, or invitation, which he has given in regard to the blessings of his kingdom: he changes

not in regard to his gifts and calling; he will not revoke his gracious declarations, but will abide faithful and steadfast in his purpose. — The unchangeableness of God, thus confirming the declaration in the 28th verse, that the Jews will continue beloved for the fathers' sakes, forms also the ground of the assurance in vs. 31 and 32.

30, 31. *For as ye in times past*, etc. God still adheres to his original purpose of mercy, and will accomplish it even through the disobedience of those who were his people. As you, Gentiles, were formerly disobedient to God and destitute of his favor, but have now obtained mercy by occasion of the Jews' disobedience, so the plan of God, as to his ultimately bestowing mercy on the Jews, will be accomplished through the mercy bestowed on you: the Jews having become disobedient and having failed of the favor of God, in order that, through the mercy bestowed on you, they might in turn receive mercy. || *Through your mercy*; through mercy shown to you.

32. *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief*, etc. The word *them* ought not to have been admitted into the translation; as the original does not contain here a word corresponding to it, and the word *all* in the original, as is manifest from the connection, relates not to Jews exclusively, but to all men, Jews and Gentiles. The apostle's idea is, that God has shut up all, both Jews and Gentiles, in a state of disobedience, regarded them all as alike chargeable with dis-

33 O THE depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his  
 34 ways past finding out ! For who hath known the mind of  
 35 the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ? Or who hath  
 first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him  
 36 again ? For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all  
 things : to whom *be* glory for ever ! Amen.

obedience, that he might be merciful to all, both Jews and Gentiles, saving all, of every nation, who comply with the terms of mercy and saving none, of whatever people, on the ground of their own righteousness. — The word *unbelief* in vs. 30-32 does not so correctly express the original word, as *disobedience*; *unbelief* being properly the translation of a different word.  
 || *That he might have mercy upon all*; that all, having been brought to a consciousness of sin, might feel their dependence on mercy and be prepared to receive the grace, or the gratuitous salvation, of the gospel, and that all who comply with the terms of mercy might actually receive mercy. — That such is the idea of the apostle, appears from the pervading doctrine of the epistle; it being wholly inconsistent with the leading views of the epistle to suppose that every human being, whether conscious of sinfulness or not, and whether accepting the divine method of mercy or not, shall actually be an object of God's saving mercy.

33-36. The thought of the mercy of God, in his so amply providing for the redemption of men, of his eternal purposes, of his carrying his designs into effect in ways wholly unexpected and beyond anticipation, so that in the fulness of time they are accomplished notwithstanding, and even by occasion of, the perversity of men,

stirs the apostle's mind with adoring sentiments.—*O the depth of the riches*, etc. Some prefer to render this clause, O the depth of the riches, that is, of the rich mercy, 10: 12, and wisdom and knowledge of God ! His mercy is rich, indeed superabundant, since it has made not only adequate, but most ample, provision for the bestowal of blessing which no merits of men could, by any possibility, secure.  
 || *His judgments*; his judgments, or determinations, as to what he will accomplish; that is, his purposes.  
 || *His ways*; his methods of accomplishing his purposes.

34. *For who hath known the mind of the Lord*, etc. Who knew the mind, the intention, of the Lord ? Who was his counsellor ? Obviously, none. He has all wisdom and knowledge in himself; his own infinite mind proposes its objects and provides for their attainment. Compare Is. 40: 13.

35, 36. *Or who hath first given to him*, etc. Who has ever laid an obligation on God, so as to claim from him a recompense ? Such a pretence would be the height of absurdity and profaneness: for all things originate from him (compare 1 Chron. 29: 10-14); all things are done through him; and all things find their ultimate aim in him. To him, then, be glory forever. Amen.

## CHAPTER XII.

Exhortation to Christian conduct in general, 1-21.

1 I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,  
that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, accepta-  
2 ble unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not  
conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the re-

### CHAPTERS XII—XV: 1-13.

These chapters comprise the hortatory division of the epistle, in which the apostle enjoins the cultivation of the Christian temper generally, obedience to magistrates, and mutual accommodation on the part of Gentile and of Jewish believers, in respect to ceremonial observances which originated in the Mosaic law.

### CHAPTER XII.

1. *I beseech you therefore*, etc. The word *therefore* connects the hortatory part of the epistle with the preceding doctrinal part, as containing the practical lessons appropriate to all believers in Christ, and to the Roman Christians in particular. The apostle's mind had been occupied with views of the mercy of God in providing for men's salvation, and in preserving a remnant of the Jews from the destruction which the mass of the nation were bringing on themselves. In view of this mercy, he beseeches the Roman brethren to offer up themselves to God as a sacrifice, to be wholly his in their temper and conduct. || *That ye present your bodies*; that ye offer up your persons, yourselves. The idea of a sacrifice offered to God being in the apostle's mind, his language was shaped by that image. As the bodies of slain animals were offered, he naturally em-

ployed the word *bodies* as signifying the whole person. Compare 6: 13. || *A living sacrifice*, etc. Slaughtered victims were the sacrifices of the Jewish ritual: in distinction from these, believers in Christ should be living sacrifices, devoted to God in the use of their living, active powers. As the animals for sacrifice under the Mosaic law were required to be ceremonially clean, without blemish, so the Christian sacrifice was to be holy, morally pure. || *Which is your reasonable service*; rather, your spiritual service, the service of your mind and heart.—As sacrifices formed a part of the Jewish worship, the word is here employed, in the original, which particularly signifies *service in worship*; and Christians, in offering up themselves to God for the cultivation of such tempers of mind, and for such conduct in all the relations and circumstances of life, as are acceptable to God, are considered as rendering him a spiritual worship. The entire life of a Christian, so far as it is devoted to God and spent in conformity to his will, is a kind of living, or constant, worship, since the whole spirit and body are occupied in doing his pleasure and glorifying him.

2. *Be not conformed to this world*; to this present evil world, Gal. 1: 4; to the spirit and maxims of the men of this world, Luke 16: 8. 1 Cor. 2: 6, 8. The *present world* is characterized by its being unspiritual, sin-

newing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

**3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think ; but to think soberly, according as God

ful, in distinction from the world of pretenders divide the latter part of the verse thus : *what is the will of God, what is good, acceptable, and perfect.* The renewed mind proves what is *good* in distinction from what is *evil*, what is *acceptable* to God in distinction from what is *displeasing to him*, and what is *perfect or complete*, from what is *deficient* as to the measure of duty. The judgments of a renewed mind are often widely different from those of a mind which has not felt the transforming power of the Holy Spirit ; and on many topics of religion, the human mind needs to be renewed in order to judge correctly.

**3. For I say.** The apostle now proceeds to give specimens of what is the will of God to which believers in Christ should become conformed. || *Through the grace given unto me :* through the divine favor which had been shown in calling him to be an apostle. 1: 5. Eph. 3: 8. By virtue of the authority with which divine grace had invested him, he enjoins the temper and conduct at which believers should aim. || *Not to think of himself more highly, etc.* ; not to indulge in too high an estimate of himself, but to judge of himself with sobriety, according to the degree of Christian faith which God has bestowed on him.—The idea is not, that, if his measure of faith exceed that of his brethren, he may therefore judge more favorably of himself than of them ; but, as each one's measure of faith comes from God, he should therefore make a modest estimate of himself and be humble as being dependent on the bounty of God. Compare 1 Cor. 3: 5. 4: 7. Faith, being regarded by the apostle as the essential element of the Christian

4 hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not 5 the same office : so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, 6 and every one members one of another. Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of 7 faith : or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering : or he that 8 teacheth, on teaching : or he that exhorteth, on exhortation :

life, seems to be here used as a generic term significant of Christian character, and more particularly of such knowledge of the gospel as best accords with high spiritual attainments.

4. *For as we have many members*, etc. A modest estimate of one's self is enforced by the consideration that the company of believers, whether the whole, or regarded in the several portions with which they are more immediately connected, forms a body, the various members of which must harmoniously perform their several offices, whether more or less important, in order to accomplish the designs for which the body was formed. || *All members*; more correctly, *all the members*.

5. *One body in Christ*; one body as belonging to Christ our Head, one Christian body. Compare Eph. 4: 15, 16. 1 Cor. 12: 12-27.

6. *Gifts*; spiritual endowments, capacities for rendering service to the cause of Christ, either bestowed by divine grace, or natural talents sanctified and elevated by that grace into fit agencies for promoting the gospel. Compare 1 Cor. 12: 4. || *Prophecy*. The gift of prophecy was possessed by a class of persons who were able, both by divine revelations and by sanctified natural endowments, to instruct and exhort in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, and occasionally to foretell future events. Their gift was held of great value; and in the enumeration of offices, the prophets stand next to the apostles. Acts 11: 27. 21: 9, 10. 1 Cor. 12: 28. 14:

29, 30. Eph. 4: 11. || *According to the proportion of faith*; that is, as in verse 3, the measure of faith; or, in proportion to the strength of faith, or genuine belief, that the communication to be delivered, whether prediction or exhortation, was divinely imparted.

7. *Ministry*; the various ministrations, or services, which the welfare of a church would require; as, for instance, the care of the indigent members, the outward arrangements for worship and other external matters. || *He that teacheth*. Teachers seem to have differed from prophets, in that their employment was stated and regular, not occasional, and not requiring special revelations.

8. *He that exhorteth*. A particular class of men is not, probably, here intended, as the word *exhort* is very variously used. Compare Acts 15: 32. 1 Cor. 14: 31. || *He that giveth*; that is, in the way of personal, or private, benevolence, as the original word indicates *sharing with another* what we possess. Compare Luke 3: 11. Eph. 4: 28. || *With simplicity*; with singleness of intention to benefit the needy, and, by implication, with kindness and liberality. The same word is translated *liberality* in 2 Cor. 8: 2, and *bountifulness* in 2 Cor. 9: 11. || *He that ruleth*; he that presides, probably in the pastoral relation. In 1 Thess. 5: 12 the same word, substantially, in the original is rendered by the words *are over you*. || *He that sheweth mercy*; he that performs deeds of kindness in general for the distressed. || *With cheerful-*

he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity: he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

9   *Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but descend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in

*ness.* 2 Cor. 9: 7.—In verses 6–8, the apostle seems to have united under the general name of *gifts* the disposition and capacity for some private duties with the official services of certain classes. This was in harmony with his use of the term *gift*, since he sometimes employed it in cases that did not properly belong to the public welfare. 1 Cor. 7: 7. Besides, the *simplicity* and *cheerfulness* which he enjoined in respect to the duties of benevolence might well be traced to divine influence, as gifts of the Holy Spirit.

10. *In honor*; respect, esteem. || *Preferring one another*; literally, *taking the lead of one another, as setting each other an example, in mutual respect.* Compare Phil. 2: 3.

11. *Not slothful in business.* The word here rendered *business* is translated, in verse 8, *diligence*; in 2 Cor. 7: 11, *carefulness*; in 2 Cor. 8: 7, 8, *diligence, forwardness.*—This clause, then, is probably better rendered, *In regard to diligence, that is, activity in the cause of Christ, not slothful.*

13. *Given to hospitality.* Heb. 13: 2. 1 Pet. 4: 9.

14. *Bless them which persecute you.* Matt. 5: 44. Luke 6: 27, 28.

15. *Rejoice with them, etc.* Joy at the good of others is often a surer

proof of the sincerity and strength of piety, than sympathy in their distresses: it may be more free from alloy.

16. *Be of the same mind*, etc.; of the same spirit, or disposition; be like-minded, Phil. 3: 16. || *Condescend to men of low estate.* The original is singularly expressive: *Being led away by lowly things*, as the contrast of *minding high things*; that is, being attracted more by the lowly circumstances in which any of your brethren may be placed, than by high things. || *Be not wise in your own conceits.*—To such union of spirit as should characterize the members of a Christian church, humility is most friendly, while self-conceit is its dire foe.

17. *Recompense to no man evil for evil.* 1 Pet. 3: 9. || *Provide things honest*, etc. The word *honest* was probably understood here by our translators in the sense of *honorable*, or *becoming*: the more general term *good* or *upright*, seems preferable. Carefulness for what is good in the sight of all, for what the judgment and moral sense of men would pronounce right and proper, is enjoined; in other words, carefulness to walk uprightly. See 2 Cor. 8: 21. Compare Prov. 3: 4.

18 the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I 20 will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing 21 thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Subjection to magistrates and discharge of all civil duties, 1-7. Injunction of mutual love, 8-10. Incitement to renewed Christian vigilance and activity, 11-14.

18. *If it be possible*, etc. Be at peace with all men, if it be possible. Others may make it impossible, since they may originate and foster causes of strife: but as much as in you lieth, so far as any thing proceeding from you is concerned, so far as depends on you, be at peace with all. If strife arise, let not the cause of it lie with you.

19. *Give place unto wrath*; yield to wrath; resist it not with corresponding wrath, nor take vengeance on your foe: leave the work of vengeance for God, the righteous ruler. || *For it is written*. Deut. 32 : 35.

20. *Therefore, if thine enemy hunger*, etc. See Prov. 25 : 21, 22. || *Thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head*. This was a proverbial saying, indicating that the treatment here enjoined would make the evil doer smart under a sense of his wrong deeds, or produce a burning sense of his wrong doing. Such treatment would excite in him shame and compunction, which might issue in his highest good.

21. *Be not overcome of evil*, etc.; be not overcome by evil, so as to do evil in return; but triumph over evil by repaying it with good.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The Jews, as a people, being subjugated by the Roman government, were exceedingly restive under it, as being a heathen and idolatrous power. Their mistaken zeal for the glory of God and their expectation that the Messiah, as the head of the Jewish people, would bring all nations under his sway, kept them in a constant state of readiness for insurrectionary movements. In consequence, the Roman magistrates were constantly on their guard against political outbreaks among the Jews; and even the Christians in Rome, being regarded by the civil authorities as a sect of the Jews, were constantly exposed to suspicion and probably shared in some public severities which were really occasioned by the misconduct, not of Christians, but of the Jews. Thus, in Acts 18 : 2, we learn that Aquila and Priscilla had left Italy, because Claudius, the emperor, had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome. Though Aquila and Priscilla were Jews by birth, they had become Christians and had separated themselves, as to religion, from the mass of the Jews. This fact, however,

1 LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God : the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist shall 3 receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt

could not be properly apprehended by the magistrates and did not secure exemption from rigors which were designed to rid the city of Jewish insurrections. Perhaps, too, some of the Christians, Gentile as well as Jewish, actually believed that they might righteously plot against an idolatrous government, as being a part of the kingdom of Satan.—Hence, the apostle judged it necessary to enjoin on them submission to the existing magistracy in all things pertaining to their civil relations. On matters beyond the province of the civil authorities, such as religious worship, he here says nothing. He is writing to Christians; and they could not, consistently, join in the prevalent idolatry, while yet in all civil matters they might submit to the ruling powers. He enjoins submission to the civil authorities on two grounds: 1. A regard to the will of God. Civil government is his appointment; and those who occupy the seats of power have been placed there by his providence. 2. A regard to their own good. Obedient subjects will enjoy the protection of the government; rebellious subjects will incur its wrath. Vs. 1-7.

The injunction to discharge all civil duties is followed by an injunction to leave no obligation whatever undischarged; and that, the rather, since the time is near when the hoped for salvation shall be consummated: hence, sinful practices should be laid aside, and the truly Christian spirit be acted out. Vs. 8-14.

1. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers:* let every one submit

himself to the civil authorities, the magistrates. || *For there is no power but of God;* for magistracy is from no other source but God; it exists by his appointment. || *The powers that be,* etc.; the existing civil authorities were appointed by God.—Magistracy, not however any particular form of it, is here declared to be of divine appointment; and the ruling powers, actually in authority, are declared to have been set in their station by divine providence.

2. *Whosoever, therefore, resisteth,* etc.; whoever, then, arrays himself rebelliously against the civil authority, opposes the appointment of God. || *Damnation.* This word was formerly used in a broader sense than at present. *Judgment carried into execution* probably expresses the apostle's idea; the judgment, or punishment, proceeding, agreeably to the first clause of the verse, from God. It may, however, be from God as a providential visitation through the agency of the rulers, and reference, therefore, be made to the civil punishment: at the same time, as resistance opposes the appointment of God, the punitive results, as in all cases of sin, are not merely external and present, but reach to the soul and the future world.

3 *For rulers are not a terror,* etc. Rulers are not an object of dread to good works, that is, to those subjects who faithfully observe the laws pertaining to civil duties: such have no occasion for fear; it is those whose deeds, in civil respects, are evil, who, instead of complying with the civil regulations, array themselves against

4 have praise of the same ; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.  
 5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but  
 6 also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also : for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon

the government, create disturbances, and aim to overthrow the government, it is those to whom rulers are a terror.—The apostle confines his view to government as regulating the civil relations of its subjects. In the case of religious persecutions on the part of magistrates, he would probably direct the Christians to regard them as trials and afflictions to which they must submit, as they would do other providential dispensations for which they are not responsible; while for the miseries which they would meet in consequence of engaging in schemes against the government they would be personally responsible, as having brought them on themselves unnecessarily and in violation of their civil duties. || *Do that which is good*; good in your relations to the civil power. || *Praise of the same*. The word *same* refers to the power : by doing what is good, as a subject, you will have commendation from the authorities.

4. *For he is the minister of God*, etc. ; for the magistrate is a servant of God for your benefit.—The magistrate, even though a heathen, is here regarded as a servant of God, because God established civil government and, by his providence, brought that magistrate to his station of power, thus making him the medium of good even to Christians. || *But if thou do that which is evil*, etc. ; if you disregard your civil obligations, and create disturbances, you may well fear. || *For he beareth not the sword in vain*. The sword, as borne by the magistrate, was an emblem of the power of putting to death for offences

against the state. This power of inflicting the punishment of death the magistrate does not possess in vain.

The apostle gives not the slightest intimation that the power of capital punishment, lodged with the magistrates, was either unjust or unsuitable. In cases of personal injury he forbids taking vengeance, and directs that punishment be referred to God. 12: 19. But the case of a magistrate, in his public capacity, is different : he may inflict the punishment of death, agreeably to the laws, without the least indulgence of personal revenge; indeed, with the most sincere compassion for the criminal. || *For he is the minister of God*, etc. ; the magistrate, using the sword of justice in the discharge of his office, is a servant of God, an avenger for the punishment of the criminal.

5. *Wherefore*, etc. The conclusion from the preceding views is here given : it is necessary to be in subjection to the civil power, not only on account of the punishment which would follow resistance, but also to preserve a good conscience. A regard to personal good, and a regard to the claims of conscience, unite in requiring obedience ; resistance is incompatible with both.

6. *For, for this cause pay ye tribute also*. It is uncertain, in the original, whether the first clause of this verse should be regarded as an exhortation to pay tribute, or as a declarative statement that the Roman Christians were in the habit of paying tribute. But whichever of these is the true view, the apostle evidently teaches that the just ground on which the

7 this very thing. Render therefore to all, their dues : tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honor to whom honor.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another : for he  
9 that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou  
shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt  
not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not  
covet ; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly  
10 comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy  
neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor :  
therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

payment of tribute rests is the very same as he had mentioned for submission to the government in general. He repeats, substantially, the first clause of the fourth verse, as presenting the proper ground for the payment of tribute ; namely, that the officers who had charge of this part of the public affairs were servants of God, men called in his providence to this service. The service which they rendered was for the support of the government, and was thus subsidiary to the divine arrangement in appointing magistracy. To refuse the payment of tribute would, therefore, be to oppose a divine appointment.—The apostle's language here, if regarded as declarative rather than horatory, would encourage those who had always viewed the matter in this light, while it would kindly correct the error of any who might have viewed the matter differently.—Among the Jews, the payment of taxes to the Romans was a continual grievance. It was a perpetual token of their subjection to a foreign and heathen power, and was the occasion, on the part of daring leaders, of resistance to the government, and of apparently conscientious query among the well-disposed. See Matt. 22 : 17.

7. *Render therefore to all, their dues.*  
Having shown the grounds of obedience in general to the civil authorities and to the demand for tribute in par-

ticular, he closes this topic by enjoining the discharge of all dues to state officers. *Tribute*; taxes. || *Custom*; duties imposed by law on goods imported or exported. || *Fear*; in reference to judges. || *Honor*; in reference to the higher magistrates, or to the magistracy in general.—Compare 1 Tim. 2 : 1, 2. Tit. 3 : 1. 1 Pet. 2 : 13-17.

8, 9. The direction to pay all public officers their dues he now extends, and makes it touch all cases of obligation.—*Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.* Be in no man's debt, as to any thing : with the exception of one debt, or obligation, which it is impossible should be ever so discharged as to warrant an exemption from it ; namely, the debt of mutual love. From this we can never be discharged ; it is perpetually binding. The pressure of this duty we ought ever to feel ; for in performing it, we are fulfilling the law of God ; since all the directions of his law, pertaining to our social relations, may be comprised in the one direction, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Obviously, true love to others will prevent all those social wrongs which the decalogue forbids, and secure obedience to any command which provides for the good of others.

10. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.* True love to one's neighbor cannot prompt injury to him, but rather the opposite good : it is therefore the

11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

fulfilling of the law, because the law forbids all wrong doing to a neighbor, that is, to any other person. If, also, a man have the spirit of love, he has that which prompts a cheerful obedience to all divine commands. Christian obedience is not merely compliance with extraneous commands; it springs from the heart. Where genuine love is the ruling principle, obedience to the divine will follows naturally and spontaneously.

11. *And that.* An enforcement now follows of the injunction in the 8th verse, not to leave any social obligation undischarged, from the consideration that we are rapidly hastening to our complete salvation. || *Knowing the time*, etc.; knowing what point of time we have reached, that it is the hour for us to be already aroused from sloth and earnestly engaged in the work of the Christian life. Compare 1 Thess. 5: 6-9. The Roman Christians would doubtless feel that, in view of their obligations and prospects, they were not half awake and needed to be aroused from spiritual torpor. || *Salvation*; deliverance from the annoyances and temptations of the present state: these were great and numerous amid the prevailing vices of Rome and the hostility which, in various forms, the Christians were compelled to encounter. *Salvation* would also be the consummation of their hopes in heaven. That glorious end of the Christian course, the apostle felt, was drawing near to him and his fellow Christians;

and the nearer it was, the more prepared for it should they seek to become.

12. *The night is far spent.* The whole period of the present state is here regarded as comparatively night, and this was to them now far advanced. || *The day*; the state to which the disciples of Christ were tending, the endless day of holiness and bliss in the Messiah's kingdom. || *Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness*, etc. Darkness is expressive of ignorance and sin; *works of darkness* are sinful deeds and indulgences not fit to see the light. *Light* is expressive of knowledge and holiness; *to put on the armor of light* is to be in constant readiness for all righteous deeds. The exhortation is, Cease from sinful indulgences and in good earnest live righteously.

13. *Let us walk honestly as in the day*, etc. Let us live as in broad day light, honorably, in a manner becoming our Christian profession and our avowed hopes, not in bacchanalian revels, in licentiousness, in strife and heart-burnings.

14. *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* To put on Christ is to come into close intimacy with Christ in our affections and conduct, as a garment is closely connected with its wearer, and to make ourselves known by our lives as those to whom Christ has united himself and who worthily represent his religion. In other words, Be decidedly Christ-like in your temper and life; and make no provision for carnal indulgences.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Mutual accommodation in matters which are liable to diversity of judgment, 1-23.

### CHAPTER XIV.

The harmony of the Roman church had been disturbed by questions about the lawfulness of animal food and the religious observance of certain days. The Mosaic law forbade the use of certain animals as food; and the Jews consequently felt bound to avoid them, as unclean and unlawful. It also forbade the use of blood: animals, allowed for food, must be prepared for use in a manner that would effectually drain their blood. Some practices among the Gentiles in regard to the slaughtering of animals and preparing them for food, naturally deepened the Jews' abhorrence of what they regarded as polluted, and polluting, food. The Gentiles offered animal sacrifices, also, to their gods, and portions of such sacrifices were sent to the markets for sale; so that purchasers were constantly liable to buy food that had been offered up to a heathen god. The use of such food was regarded by many as sharing in the guilt of idolatry. By these united influences, it is probable that some of the Jews had become prejudiced against all animal food, since they might, unconsciously, whenever they ate it, be partaking of food that would defile them by its very kind, or by the manner of its preparation, or by its having been offered to idols; and when Jews of such sentiments became Christians, they probably retained their conscientious scruples, and, besides believing that it would be wrong in them to use animal food, objected to its use by any Christians. The Gentile believers, not having been accustomed to the distinction between clean and unclean, or lawful and pro-

hibited, in reference to food, and not having been taught, by preachers of the gospel, any distinction of this kind as belonging to the Christian religion, and being superior to any scruples about idolatry, while conscious of not practising, or approving, it, could not sympathize with the Jewish sentiment, and felt at liberty to eat whatever they chose. Doubtless, some of the Jewish believers also, in accordance with the spirit of the apostle himself, regarded the Mosaic prohibition as no longer binding and had correct ideas of Christian liberty.

The Mosaic law enjoined, also, the observance of several days in the course of a year, both as feasts and as fasts; and custom had increased the number of such days. Some of the converted Jews felt conscience-bound on this point, while many of their fellow Christians, both Jewish and Gentile, of more comprehensive views and untrammelled by a weak conscience, acknowledged no such distinction of days. Compare Gal. 4: 10. Col. 2: 16-23.

Diversity of opinion in the Roman church, on both of these subjects, led to mutual alienation: the unduly scrupulous condemned those who felt at liberty to dispense with ritual observances; the more strong-minded held the weak in contempt. The apostle aimed to restore harmony by bringing the contending parties to a spirit of mutual accommodation. He censured each of them as wrong in their conduct towards the other, whether in condemning or in despising. But while he defended the strong-minded against the harsh judgment of their weaker brethren, he was

1   HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all  
 2   things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him  
     that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him  
     which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath re-  
 4   ceived him. Who art thou that judgest another man's ser-  
     vant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall  
 5   be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man  
     esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every  
     day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own  
 6   mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the

more particularly solicitous to correct the unfraternal feelings of the strong-minded and to caution them against a use of their liberty, which might be pernicious to their brethren.

1. *Him that is weak in the faith;* a Christian brother who is unable to extricate himself from needless scruples of conscience. || *Receive ye,* etc.; admit him to your Christian regards, not to disputes about his doubts, or about matters respecting the allowableness of which he is not able to satisfy himself.

2. The apostle now presents one of the cases which had produced diversity of opinion and conduct in the Roman church, and in respect to which persons who took opposite sides equally needed advice.—*One believeth*, etc. One firmly believes it right for him to eat all kinds of food, animal as well as vegetable: but another who is weak-minded in regard to ceremonial matters, and whose conscience is morbidly scrupulous, eateth vegetable food only.

3. Directions are now given to the two classes, represented by these two Christians.—*Let not him that eateth despise*, etc.; let not him that eateth all kinds of food despise him who, through weakness of judgment and conscience, abstains from every thing but vegetable food: on the other hand, let not him who does not use animal food pass judgment on him who uses it. For God has received to his favor him who eateth as well

as him who eateth not; being a believer in Christ, he, as well as the one of a weakly-sensitive conscience, is admitted to favor with God.

4. The impropriety of the weak brother's passing judgment on the other is now exposed.—*Who art thou that judgest*, etc. What right hast thou to pass judgment on a servant who does not belong to thee, but to another, even to Christ? Christ is his Master; and according to his own master's judgment he is to stand accepted, or to fall condemned. Yea: he shall be made to stand, since he is a believer; for God is able to make him stand in Christian integrity and in divine approval. Instead, then, of harshly judging him that eats, regard him as a fellow-servant accountable to the same common Lord as thyself.

5. The other case which had disturbed fraternal harmony is next presented.—*One man esteemeth one day above another*, etc. Some Jewish Christians retained a conscientious feeling in regard to the days appointed by the Mosaic law for sacred observances: the Gentile Christians in general, not having been accustomed to the observance of those days, and doubtless some Jewish Christians, felt under no obligation to regard them. The apostle's direction in regard to this matter is, that every Christian should act according to his own conviction of what God requires.

Lord : and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother ? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall*

day a Christian may act piously, and in declining to regard it, another Christian may act piously, with a sincere intent to please the Lord in his employment of time. — *He that regardeth the day, etc.* ; he that regardeth the day regards it out of respect to the Lord's will ; and he that regards it not, he too, in like manner, *declines to regard* it out of respect to the Lord's will. The same truly religious motive may actuate one in observing the day, and the other in not observing it : both may equally cherish a pious regard to the will of the Lord. — The apostle now returns to the case of food as coming under the same rule, and as the two cases are alike in the principle which should regulate a Christian's conduct, he speaks in the subsequent verses only of the question pertaining to food. || *He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, etc.* He that eateth animal food, as well as vegetable, eateth it with a religious acknowledgment of the Lord ; for he thanks God who has appointed it for man's use : on the other hand, he who doth not eat it declines to use it out of regard, in like manner, to his convictions of the Lord's will, and religiously thanks God for the provision which he has made for man's necessities. Both the one and the other have a regard to the Lord's will.

7, 8. *For none of us liveth to himself, etc.* This regard to the will of Christ in whatever we do is eminently proper ; for we are not our own, we belong to Christ : by the fact of our being Christians, no one of us lives, or dies, as being his own, but as belonging to Christ, both in living and in dying ; that is, in the whole of our existence, whether in this world or the other, we belong to Christ.

9. *For to this end Christ both died and rose, etc.* Christ is the Lord of Christians, both the dead and the living ; and it was in order that he might become such, that he died and rose again.

10. Since, then, Christ is the common Lord of all Christians, and as such, is to be our Judge, let both the weak-minded and the strong-minded take caution. — *Why dost thou judge — why dost thou set at naught ? Why dost thou, who scrupulously abstainest from animal food, condemn thy brother ? or, why, on the other hand, dost thou, who eatest animal food, despise thy brother ?* See verse 3. For we are all to stand at the tribunal of Christ. See 2: 16. 2 Cor. 5: 10. John 5: 22, 27. Matt. 25: 31-46.

11. *For it is written :* Is. 45: 23. The idea of the quoted passage is, that every one shall bow before God, the sovereign Judge.

12 confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account  
 13 of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another  
     any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stum-  
 14 bling-block, or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way. I  
     know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is*  
 15 nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any  
     thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. But if thy brother  
 16 be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably.  
 17 Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let  
     not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of  
     God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy

12. *So then every one of us shall give account*, etc. It follows, then, that every one of us is to give account of himself to God: no one can avoid giving this account; no one will give account for another, but each for himself.

13. *Let us not therefore judge one another*, etc. Since, then, each one is to give account of himself, let us not pass judgment on one another; but decide, rather, not to put any hindrance, or any occasion of sin, in our brother's way.

14. *I know*, etc. As strengthening the determination not to put any occasion of sin in a brother's way, the apostle avows his own clear conviction, which, he was fully persuaded, was according to the mind of Christ, that no article of food is unclean in itself, or capable of defiling the soul, Mark 7: 15. Acts 10: 15; yet, if a person honestly regard it as unclean, that is, forbidden and unlawful, to him it is unclean, and it would be wrong for him to use it, because by so doing he would violate his conscience and thus contract guilt: consequently, we ought to avoid occasions of leading him thus to sin.

15. The case being so, Christian love requires a person to abstain from such an article of food who might innocently use it so far as himself alone is concerned, but who by using it might endanger another's integrity and salvation.—*If thy brother be grieved with*

*thy meat*, etc. If on account of food used by thee thy Christian brother is aggrieved, thou dost not act *charitably*; that is, according to love.—|| *Destroy not*, etc.; do not cause to perish. Compare 1 Cor. 8: 11. Be not accessory, by thy food, which pertains merely to the perishable body and to brief gratification, and is hence of very small consideration, to the perdition of him whom Christ so loved as to die for his sake.—The natural consequence of sin is here had in view, the loss of the soul. Sin, whether in a believer or an unbeliever, exposes to perdition; it is only by abiding in holiness that we can be saved. Heb. 4: 1. 12: 14. Col. 1: 22, 23.

16. *Let not then your good be evil spoken of*. Let not that which you justly esteem so great a good, namely, your Christian freedom from the yoke of the Mosaic law, be reviled in consequence of the mischiefs which would result from an undue assertion and indulgence of it; rather be willing to waive your right and prefer a brother's peace of conscience to your own gratification. The reason for this immediately follows; namely, true piety consists in other things than carefulness, on one side or on the other, about food.

17. *For the kingdom of God*, etc. For the religion of Christ, designed to establish the *reign of God* in men's souls, that is to say, genuine piety,

18 in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things, indeed, *are* pure: but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which

does not consist in food and drink, as though a man's piety depended on what he eats or declines to eat; but in righteousness of heart and life, in peace towards God and men, and in spiritual joy, such joy of soul as the Holy Spirit produces.

18. *For he that in these things serveth Christ, etc.* The sure way to command your Christian liberty is, to act as servants of Christ in these things which constitute the reign of God in the heart. He that serves Christ in these things, namely, righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy; he, who in his professed subjection to Christ exemplifies these things, will be acceptable to God and approved among men, and even among those who are weak in their consciences.

19. *Things wherewith one may edify another;* things conducive to our mutual building up in the Christian faith.

20. *For meat;* for so small a consideration as the kind of food which thou shalt eat. || *Destroy not;* literally, pull not down. || *The work of God.* This may mean the work which God is effecting among men in establishing righteousness; that is, the cause of God on earth: or, since Christians are called, 1 Cor. 3: 9, compare 3: 16, God's building, reference may be made to the Christian community, or to the church of which the parties concerned were members, viewed as a building. The idea here contrasts well with that in the pre-

ceding verse: the exhortation there is, to *build up* one another; here, not to *pull down* the work of God. || *All things indeed are pure,* etc. All kinds of food are indeed pure in themselves (compare verse 14), not communicating moral defilement, and therefore lawful to be used; yet to a person who eats *with offence*, that is, thereby occasioning another to commit sin, the eating is wrong. Compare 1 Cor. 8: 8-11.

21. *It is good neither to eat flesh,* etc. On the other hand, though a person might use whatever articles of food he chooses without incurring guilt to himself, yet to abstain from such articles when the use of them would occasion sin to another, is good and right. || *Thy brother stumbleth, or is offended,* etc.; falls into sin, or is led astray, or in respect to which his conscience is weak.—From regard to the weak conscience of another and the danger of his being led into acts which in him would be sinful, it is good for a person to deny himself what in other circumstances he might rightfully enjoy. Compare 1 Cor. 8: 13. 10: 29.

22. *Hast thou faith,* etc. More properly, *Thou hast faith;* that is, thou, the strong-minded Christian, hast a full belief that what thou doest is right. Very well; make not this belief, however, the standard by which others must judge in regard to themselves. This belief of thine should be held as a matter between

23 he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith : for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

## CHAPTER XV.

Mutual accommodation still further encouraged, 1-7. Christ, the bestower of blessings on Jews and Gentiles in common, 8-13. Apology for writing with so much boldness, 14-20. Proposal to visit the Roman brethren, after having fulfilled the trust of conveying to Jerusalem a pecuniary contribution for the indigent Christians of that city, 21-29. Bespeaking of their prayers in reference to his journey to Jerusalem, 30-33.

1 WE then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of  
2 the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us  
3 please *his* neighbor for *his* good to edification. For even  
Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The re-

God and thee, and not as emboldening thee to disregard the moral weakness of thy brother. || *Happy is he that condemneth not himself*, etc. Justly may the man account himself happy, who is free from self-condemnation in the acts which he approves.

23. *And he that doubteth*, etc.; but he, who doubts the rightfulness of eating flesh, is condemned if he eat it; because his act would not proceed from a belief that it was right: he ate, while conscientiously doubting whether he was doing right; and every act which does not proceed from a belief that it is right, is sinful; it is doing what the person suspects, at least, to be wrong, and thus his conscience is really defiled.

## CHAPTER XV.

The subject of the preceding chapter is concluded; vs. 1-13. The apostle expresses his great regard for the Roman Christians, notwithstanding the boldness with which he had

written to them, 14-16; gives a cursory view of his apostolic labors, 17-21; makes known his purpose of visiting Rome after he shall have conveyed to Jerusalem a contribution with which he had been entrusted for the indigent Christians there, 22-29; and requests a remembrance in their prayers, expressing also his interest in their welfare, 30-33.

1. *We then that are strong*, etc.; we, who have strength of judgment and conscience ought to bear with the weaknesses of our brethren, and not to please ourselves in disregard of their scruples. Compare Gal. 6: 2.

2. *Let every one of us please his neighbor*, etc. Instead of pleasing himself, each one of us should aim to please his brethren with the design of advancing their spiritual improvement.

3. *For even Christ pleased not himself*, etc. The example of Christ is produced, to enforce the exhortation: he submitted to reproach and suffer-

4 proaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, 5 according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus 6 Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.  
 7  
 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto 9 the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy: as it is written, For this cause I will confess to 10 thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And 11 again he saith: Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the LORD, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all 12 ye people. And again Esaias saith; There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

ing for the sake of God and his cause among men. || *As it is written*: Ps. 69 : 9. Compare Phil. 2 : 4, 5.

4. *Whatsoever things were written aforetime*; things written in the Old Testament. || *For our learning*, etc.; for our instruction; that we, through the patience which the scriptures enjoin and the consolation which they impart, might have well grounded and confirmed hope of eternal life.

5, 6. As a fit conclusion to his treatment of the mutual disagreements among the members of the Roman church, the apostle expresses the wish that God may bestow on them the spirit of concord, that with unity of feeling they may glorify God. *The God of patience and consolation*; the God who bestows patience and consolation, as mentioned in the preceding verse. || *According to Christ Jesus*; according to the will of Christ and to his example.

7. *Wherefore receive ye one another*, etc.; receive one another to mutual kind regards, as Christ has received us into his favor and thus secured glory to God.

8, 9. *Now I say*, etc. He now finishes this discussion about the matters in controversy, by affirming that Jesus Christ became a minister of good both to Jews and Gentiles, in order to confirm the veracity of God in his promises to the patriarchs and in his predicted purpose to show mercy to the Gentiles, that they, too, might glorify God. || *Was a minister of the circumcision*. Here, as in 3 : 30, the *circumcision* designates the Jews distinctively.—*A minister* is one ministering to the good of others, rendering them service. Christ is here represented as one who took on him service for the Jews in accordance with the promises of God, thus acting *for the truth of God*, establishing his veracity. || *And that the Gentiles*, etc. He became, also, the medium of mercy to the Gentiles. The apostle may have designed here to awaken the sentiment that both Jews and Gentiles, believing in Christ, form one body and ought to cherish harmony; and that Christ, having come to minister to their common good, is an example which should prompt

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14 AND I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able

15 also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me

16 of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the

17 Holy Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through

them to minister to one another's good. Compare Luke 22: 27. Matt. 20: 28. || *As it is written.* The purpose of God to bless the Gentiles is shown by several quotations from the Old Testament; namely, Ps. 18: 49. Deut. 32: 43. Ps. 117: 1. Is. 11: 10.

13. *Now the God of hope;* the God from whom comes our hope of eternal life. || *In believing;* in believing on Christ. || *Through the power of the Holy Ghost.* The joy and peace, here prayed for, are imparted through the power of the Holy Spirit and render the hope, already cherished, more abundant and firm.

14-16. The apostle now forestalls any injurious misapprehensions which might be occasioned by the freeness with which he had written; he therefore avows his high estimate of the Roman brethren, and traces his boldness, (though he wishes to be considered as, in part, reminding them of what they already knew and were disposed to perform,) to his bearing the office and responsibility of an apostle.—*And I myself also am persuaded of you,* etc.; more correctly, *But I myself,* etc.: notwithstanding my counsels to you, I am persuaded of your kind and conciliatory spirit and your ample knowledge of the gospel. Compare 1: 8, 12.

15. *The more boldly;* more boldly

than would seem consistent with my avowed persuasion of your goodness and knowledge. || *In some sort, as, etc.;* in part, as reminding you of what you already know. || *Because of the grace that is given to me,* etc. The real cause of his boldness in addressing them was, that God had by his grace invested him with the responsibility of an apostle. Compare 1: 5. 12: 3. It was neither through lack of confidence in his brethren, nor through assumption of authority, that he wrote with so much freedom.

16. *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles,* etc. The original terms here employed are quite peculiar: they describe the apostle's work as a priestly service rendered to Christ in reference to the Gentiles, in which he officiated by making known to them the gospel, in order that they might become an offering to God, acceptable to him, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.—In other words, he had been divinely called to the apostleship among the Gentiles in order that they might partake of the influences and blessings of the gospel and become an accepted and holy people of God.

17-21. In view of the appointment to the apostleship among the Gentiles, he had great cause for rejoicing, since Christ had accomplished much by him in respect to the con-

18 Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

version of the Gentiles, particularly those to whom Christ was before unknown.—*I have therefore whereof I may glory, etc.*: I have therefore a ground for glorying in Christ Jesus; that is, in my connection with Christ, as being his agent in promoting the cause of God.

18. *For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, etc.* Compare 2 Cor. 10: 13–16. This avowal of unwillingness to mention any thing which Christ had not effected through him, virtually contains the idea that Christ had wrought much through him. He may be considered as saying, I will not venture to say a word about things which Christ has not accomplished by me; for I should, indeed, regard this as arrogance; but I may venture to speak of what he has accomplished by me, in making the Gentiles obedient to the gospel. || *By word and deed;* by speech and act, by making known the gospel and performing deeds in confirmation of it. — The means employed for the conversion of the Gentiles are here intimated; namely, the preaching of the gospel and the miraculous deeds which attested its divine authority.

19. *Through mighty signs and wonders;* literally, *by the power of signs and wonders,* the miracles wrought by the apostle. Compare Acts 16: 16, 18. 19: 11, 12. || *By the power of the Spirit of God.* The preaching of

the gospel and the working of miracles were made effectual by the Spirit of God. Thus while glorying, the apostle took no honor to himself: it was Christ who wrought through him; his labors were made effectual by the Holy Spirit. Compare 1 Cor. 3: 5–9. 4: 6, 7. || *So that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum, etc.* The extent of territory over which his labors were spread, furnished ground, also, for glorying in his relation to Christ; namely, from Jerusalem and round about (perhaps, in the expression, *round about*, he meant to include Arabia, Gal. 1: 17, and Damascus, Acts 9: 22) to Illyricum, a country of Europe on the north-east shore of the Adriatic Sea. A mere glance at a map shows how extensive were his travels in preaching the gospel and planting churches. || *I have fully preached,* etc. The idea is, that he had preached through all that extent of territory, thus giving completeness in all those regions to his official work.

20, 21. *Yea, so have I strived,* etc. He here intimates a limitation in regard to the places where he had preached: though he had travelled so extensively, yet it had been his aim to spread the gospel, not where it had already been made known, but where Christ had not been named, thus acting in harmony with the prophetic declaration, in Is. 52: 15, that knowledge of Christ was to be dif-

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from  
 23 coming to you. But now having no more place in these  
 parts, and having a great desire these many years to come  
 24 unto you, whosoever I take my journey into Spain I will  
 come to you; for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be  
 brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be some-  
 25 what filled with your *company*. But now I go unto Jerusa-  
 26 lem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them  
 of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for  
 27 the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased  
 them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gen-  
 tiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their  
 28 duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When

fused among those who had not heard of him.—The planting of the gospel in the dark regions of idolatry and superstition was a favorite object with the apostle and was in literal accordance with his commission from Christ. See Acts 26 : 16-18.

22-29. The apostle expresses his desire to visit the Roman brethren.—*For which cause*; namely, the incessant demand for his labors in the regions which he had indicated in verse 19. || *Much hindered*; more correctly, *many times, or many years, hindered*.

23. *Having no more place in these parts*; having no longer a place for laboring, or an occasion for laboring, in these regions, since throughout them the gospel has been made known.

24. *Whosoever*, etc. He cherished the purpose of extending his labors as far as to Spain, and was intending, when he should undertake this contemplated tour, to pass through Rome and visit the brethren there. || *And to be brought on my way*. It was customary, when a person was setting out on a journey, or re-commencing it after tarrying awhile at a place, for particular friends to accompany him a short distance.—Hence the expression, *to be brought on the way, or, literally, to be sent forward*. Compare Acts 15: 3. 20: 38. 21:

5. 3 John, verse 6. || *If first I be somewhat filled with your company*. His regard for the Roman brethren made him anticipate much enjoyment in his visit to them; but a full satisfaction of his desires he could not promise himself: his purpose to prosecute his official labors would allow him to gratify his desires only in part.

25. *But now I go unto Jerusalem*, etc. Compare Acts 24: 17. He was the bearer of a contribution made for the indigent Christian Jews in Jerusalem.

26, 27. *And their debtors they are*. The Gentile Christians in Macedonia and Achaea were *pleased* to make this contribution for the poor among the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem; but, besides that, the apostle represents, it was a matter of duty: they were under obligations to Jews, and they might well feel it their duty to impart worldly good in return for the spiritual blessings which had flowed to them from the Jews.—By this suggestion, the apostle probably aimed to promote kind feeling between the Gentile and the Jewish members of the Roman church, and perhaps to secure additional aid for the suffering poor in Jerusalem.

28. *Performed this*; completed this business. || *Sealed to them this fruit*; delivered over, and thus made sure, to

therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them  
 29 this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure  
 that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the  
 blessing of the gospel of Christ.  
 30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's  
 sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together  
 31 with me in *your* prayers to God for me; that I may be  
 delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that  
 my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of  
 32 the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will  
 33 of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of  
 peace be with you all. Amen.

them this fruit of the Gentile Christians' bounty. || *I will come by you into Spain.* Whether the apostle was ever able to accomplish this purpose is doubtful. The New Testament makes no mention of an actual journey to Spain; and the entire derangement of his plans, consequent on the opposition with which the unconverted Jews assailed him on his arrival at Jerusalem, Acts 21: 17, 27, might have frustrated his purpose. When he went to Rome, it was not only as a prisoner, but also after many delays, occasioned both by Jews and by Roman magistrates; so that circumstances took an entirely different turn from that which he was anticipating.

29. *I shall come in the fulness of the blessing, etc.* Compare 1: 11, 12.

30-32. In view of the hazards of his visit to Jerusalem, he requests the intercession of the brethren at Rome. *For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, etc.*; by a regard for the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the brotherly love which the Holy Spirit has imparted.

31. *That I may be delivered, etc.* He was aware of the determined hos-

tility felt towards him by the unconverted Jews in Jerusalem. See Acts 20: 22, 23. 21: 10-13. || *And that my service, etc.*; that my service in conveying the contribution, verse 25, may be accepted of the Jewish Christians. — He knew that many of the Jewish Christians were unfavorably affected towards him, Acts 21: 17-21, and therefore feared that a contribution brought by him, and from the Gentile Christians who were so favorable to him, might not be welcomed. The visit to Jerusalem, now just about to be made by the apostle, proved the occasion of those trying scenes which are recorded in Acts, commencing at 21: 17 and occupying the remainder of that book.

33. *The God of peace.* The thought of God as the author of peace was quite appropriate in view of the disagreements which the apostle had been seeking to remove. The expression, however, was a frequent one; and probably designated God as the author of all good. See Phil. 4: 9. 1 Thess. 5: 23. 2 Thess. 3: 16. Heb. 13: 20.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Commendation of Phebe and closing salutations to numerous individuals at Rome, 1-16. Exhortation to be on their guard against false teachers, 17-20. Salutations from various persons to the Romans, 21-24. Closing commendation of the Romans to God, with ascription of praise to him, 25-27.

1 I COMMEND unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant  
2 of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in  
the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in what-  
soever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a  
3 succorer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and  
4 Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life  
laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give  
5 thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles: likewise  
greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-  
beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto

## CHAPTER XVI.

Commendation of Phebe, probably the bearer of the epistle, vs. 1, 2. Salutations to various Christians in Rome, 3-16; exhortation to avoid men who occasion dissensions, 17-20. Salutations from various individuals, 21-24; closing ascription of glory to God, 25-27.

1. *Phebe, our sister;* our Christian sister. || *A servant of the church;* probably, in conformity with the original term, *a deaconess* of the church. It is generally believed that, on account of the customs of society, certain females in churches were appointed to the care of the poor and sick of their own sex, holding a relation to the female members of the church similar to that of deacons to the entire church. || *Cenchrea;* one of the sea-ports of Corinth,—Corinth was an inland city on an isthmus, and had communication with the sea by two sea-ports, one towards Europe, the other towards Asia. Cenchrea

was the latter, a few miles distant from Corinth.

2. *In the Lord, as becometh saints;* agreeably to the will of the Lord, as it becomes Christians to receive their fellow disciples.

3, 4. *Priscilla and Aquila.* See Acts 18: 2, 3, 18. 1 Cor. 16: 19. || *Who have for my life,* etc. On what occasions they exposed their lives for the apostle, we are not informed. || *All the churches of the Gentiles.* Priscilla and Aquila seem to have travelled, for purposes of traffic, over various regions, and to have had a temporary abode in various cities. They were thus able to confer benefits on many churches, probably, by holding religious assemblies at their residences, as well as in other ways; thus, too, Christians from various regions, while in the same cities with them, were favored with religious privileges. Generally speaking, then, all the churches of the Gentiles had ground for gratitude to them.

5. *The church that is in their house.*

6 Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us.  
 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were  
 8 in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the  
 9 Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my  
 10 beloved. Salute Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute them  
 11 which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my  
 12 kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus,  
 13 which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa,  
 14 who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which  
 15 labored much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, chosen in the  
 16 Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon,  
 Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with  
 them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister,  
 16 and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute  
 one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute  
 you.

As Aquila and Priscilla had a temporary abode in various cities, they were, probably, in the habit of accommodating in their houses small assemblies of Christians for worship. Such assemblies appear to have been denominated *churches*, in accordance with the etymological meaning of the word *church* in the original, namely, an assembly, or company, of persons called together. Compare 1 Cor. 16: 19, 20, where such a company, or church, is expressly distinguished from the entire church, or *all the brethren*, in the city spoken of.— || *Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.* In 1 Cor. 16: 15, the family of Stephanas is called the *first-fruits of Achaia*. This term, however, was not intended to distinguish an individual, or a family, as the very first that adopted the religion of Christ in Achaia: it designated those who were the earliest converts to Christ in that province. To this number Epenetus belonged, as well as the family of Stephanas.

6. *Who bestowed much labor on us;* who exerted herself much in our behalf.

7. *Junia.* It is uncertain in the

original, whether Junia, or Junias, is the right name; consequently, whether a Christian brother, or a sister, is intended. || *My kinsmen*; probably, by family relation. || *My fellow prisoners*. Where and on what occasion Andronicus and Junia shared a prison with the apostle is unknown.

10. *Approved in Christ;* a tried and approved Christian.

13. *Rufus.* Whether he was the son of Simon the Cyrenian, mentioned in Mark 15: 21, as some suppose, is uncertain, since the name *Rufus* was very common. || *Chosen in the Lord;* a choice, beloved Christian. || *His mother and mine;* Rufus's own mother. She had, also, greatly endeared herself to the apostle by affection and care for him like a mother's.

16. *Salute one another with a holy kiss.* Compare 1 Cor. 16: 20. 2 Cor. 13: 12. 1 Thess. 5: 26. 1 Pet. 5: 14. This token of mutual religious affection was common among the earliest Christians. In ordinary life among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, salutation was accompanied with a kiss; and the custom naturally passed into the usages of Christians.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

18 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

After the apostles' times, it was made a matter of ecclesiastical regulation and continued for several centuries.

17-20. The apostle cautions the Romans against certain men who were opposing the genuine doctrine of the gospel, creating dissensions and occasions of sin among Christians. He probably meant the zealous Judaizers who had done so much mischief among the Galatians, Gal. 1: 6-9. 3: 1. 4: 16, 17. 5: 12, 6: 12, 13, and against whom he afterwards warned the Philippians, Phil. 3: 2, 3. Whether or not such persons had yet attempted to alienate the Romans from the true faith, it was still necessary to put the Roman brethren on their guard.—*Mark*; carefully notice. || *Offences*; occasions of stumbling, both as to the doctrine of the gospel and as to the conduct which it enjoins.

18. *They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but, etc.*; they serve not Christ, but themselves, bent only on procuring a subsistence and low gratifications. || *The simple*; the unsuspecting.

19. *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men*. Compare 1: 8. The obedience to the gospel for which the Romans had become every where distinguished, was a reason why they should avoid men who would sow dissensions among them and thus impair the church's influence. Should they come under the power of false teachers, the reputation which

they had every where enjoyed, as intelligent and established Christians, would not only be endangered, but might operate to the strengthening of error. || *I am glad therefore on your behalf*. I rejoice on account of your obedience to the gospel, and the consequent ground of hope that you will be steadfast in adhering to it. || *But yet I would have you wise—and simple*, etc. But while I rejoice in your obedience to the gospel, I yet wish, since insinuating false teachers are abroad, that you may be sagacious and wary as to what is good, shrewdly discriminating it from evil, and simple-minded as to what is evil, feeling no tendency towards it, instinctively repelling it.—The word here translated *simple* is the same as is translated *harmless* in Matt. 10: 16; and our Lord's direction in that verse, Be ye wise as serpents, *harmless* as doves, may illustrate the apostle's meaning. He may be considered as saying, I wish you, concerning what is good, to be wary and shrewd; concerning what is evil, to be simple and harmless, as doves. Compare 1 Cor. 14: 20. 2 Cor. 11: 3.

20. *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan*, etc. God who is the author of peace, 15: 33. 1 Cor. 14: 33, shall give you the victory over Satan, who is the author of dissensions.—In the expression, God shall bruise Satan under your feet, allusion is made to the ancient practice of treading down conquered enemies, or

21 Timotheus, my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and  
 22 Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who wrote  
 23 *this epistle*, salute you in the Lord. Gaius mine host, and  
 of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain  
 24 of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. The grace  
 of our Lord Jesus Christ *be with you all*. Amen.  
 25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to  
 my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to  
 the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since  
 26 the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scrip-  
 tures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the

putting the foot on their necks. See Josh. 10: 24. Compare Gen. 3: 15. 21-23. Salutations from persons who were with the apostle at the time of sending this epistle.—*Timotheus*. Acts 16: 1-3. || *Lucius*. Acts 13: 1. || *Jason*. Acts 17: 5. || *Sosipater*; probably the same as *Sopater*. Acts 20: 4.

22. *I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle*, etc. Tertius was the apostle's amanuensis, or scribe, in writing this epistle. It was the apostle's ordinary practice to employ a scribe, though he wrote the salutation at the end himself. In one case he wrote the entire epistle with his own hand. Compare Gal. 6: 11. 1 Cor. 16: 21. Col. 4: 18. 2 Thess. 3: 17. || *In the Lord*; as a disciple of Christ.

23. *Gaius, mine host and of the whole church*. See 1 Cor. 1: 14. He was in the habit of showing hospitality to Christians from all quarters.

24. *Erastus, the chamberlain, etc.*; more correctly, the *treasurer* of the city of Corinth; perhaps the person mentioned in 2 Tim. 4: 20. || *Quar-*

*tus, a brother*; a Christian brother. 25-27. The epistle concludes with an ascription of praise to God.—*To him who is of power to stablish you*, etc.; to him who is able to establish you in faith. Compare 1 Cor. 1: 8. 2 Cor. 1: 21. || *According to my gospel*; according to the gospel which I preach; or, the gospel as I preach it. Compare 2: 16. Perhaps the apos-

tle intended to distinguish *his gospel* from the erroneous views of the Judaizing teachers. || *And the preaching of Jesus Christ*; even the preaching which Christ himself has enjoined; in other words, the genuine doctrine of Christ. || *According to the revelation of the mystery*. The mystery here is the *undisclosed purpose* of God to save men through faith in Christ. See Eph. 3: 4-6, 9. Col. 1: 26. 2: 2. 4: 3. Compare the note on 11: 25. By the gospel that secret purpose has become disclosed, and thus the gospel is the revelation of that mystery. || *Which was kept secret*, etc.; which was kept in silence through all the ancient times preceding the coming of Christ.

26. *But now is made manifest*; now, in these times, since Christ has come, the purpose of God is made manifest. Col. 1: 27. || *And by the scriptures of the prophets*, etc.; and, by means of the prophetic scriptures which predicted the gospel (1: 2) and which are now fulfilled, this purpose of God is made known, published abroad, agreeably to the command of the eternal God, among all nations, in order to make them obedient to the requisition of faith in Christ (1: 5).—The apostles constantly appealed to the writings of the Old Testament in confirmation of their instructions; and it was by means of these scriptures that conviction of the truth as to the Messiah-

everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience  
**27** of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ  
 for ever. Amen.

ship of Jesus, and the validity of his claim to be accepted as the Son of God, was produced.—The apostles acted, also, under the command of the eternal God. See Acts 4: 19. 5: 19, 20. 13: 47. 1 Tim. 1: 1. Tit. 1: 3. The epithet *everlasting*, more properly *eternal*, is here of special significance; since it is He who sees the end from the beginning, by whose arrangement the method of mercy was so long kept concealed, and who in the fulness of time brought about the disclosure. The apostles who proclaimed it acted by his command, as really as the prophets who predicted the Messiah; and the gospel is the promulgation of his eternal purpose of mercy carried into effect by Jesus Christ.

**27.** *To God, only wise*, etc.; to the only wise God, etc. This verse is to be connected with the 25th; thus, To him who is able to establish you . . . to the only wise God, etc. God only is independently wise, wise in himself: compared with him, too, no being has wisdom. Compare Job. 4: 18.—A reader of the original perceives a peculiarity in the language of this doxology: and diverse modes of accounting for it are adopted.—Some suppose that the clause, *through Jesus Christ*, should be connected with

the clause, *the only wise God*, conveying the idea that the wisdom of God is eminently displayed through Christ. Eph. 3: 10, 11. The relative pronoun, occurring here, in the original, is also regarded by some as used instead of the personal pronoun. It has also been thought, that, by means of the relative pronoun, Christ is the designed object of the ascription, the reader's mind being left to supply the omission thus occasioned in the former part of the sentence.

The subscription usually attached to this epistle, stating that it was sent from Corinth, and that it was conveyed by Phebe of Cenchrea, though probably correct, was appended long after the apostle's time. In like manner, the subscriptions to the other epistles did not proceed from the apostle. "Some of them," as Horne observes in his Introduction to the Scriptures, vol. II. pp. 154, 155, "are beyond all doubt false. . . . They are altogether wanting in some ancient manuscripts of the best note, while in others they are greatly varied. . . . According to Dr. Mill, they were added by Euthalius, bishop of Sulca in Egypt, about the middle of the fifth century."



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